

Moscow's attempt to evade arms treaty could aid Saddam, US study says

Iraq may have secret Soviet SS-12 missiles

From Peter Stothard, US editor, in Washington and our foreign staff

A HIGH-level American intelligence study has warned the White House that Iraq may have accurate medium-range Soviet SS-12 missiles in addition to its arsenal of Scuds.

The SS-12, with a range of almost 600 miles, was one of the weapons which the Soviet Union was supposed to have destroyed after the 1987 intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty. It is now increasingly thought that a small number of the missiles may have been parked in Iraq by the Soviet military to evade the treaty.

Administration sources say the SS-12, which could strike strategic targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel, is on a controversial intelligence list of weapons which President Saddam Hussein may have so far kept unused. The missiles, which were originally intended to carry nuclear warheads, can be fitted with conventional or chemical charges, and fired from the same launcher as a Scud.

Initial reports of the breach of the INF treaty were circulating in Washington before

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Christmas. Western diplomatic sources said news of the secret shipment of missiles came originally from Turkey. Senior Pentagon officials referred to the possibility that "not all Saddam's Scuds were what they seemed to be".

These reports were given little official endorsement at a time when Mr Gorbachev was considered to be trustworthy and to have a high degree of control of his military. Recent events - and new discoveries of Soviet treaty violations in East Germany - have led to a reevaluation. Yesterday James Baker, the Secretary of State, confirmed earlier reports of American frustration of Soviet attempts to evade commitments made under the CFE accords.

The Iraqi possession of SS-12s is still a highly debated issue in Washington. One senior State Department source said he had seen nothing that lent itself to the description of the disputed missile. No photograph of an SS-12 in Iraq has been seen, according to normally well-placed sources. The White House is said, however, to be taking seriously its new intelligence report.

Baghdad Radio, quoting a foreign ministry statement, said yesterday that Iraq had decided to cut diplomatic relations with the US, Britain, France, Italy, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Baghdad also accused allied forces of trying to bomb Iraq

out of the 20th century and said President Bush would be a target for revenge for the rest of his life. The radio, monitored by the BBC, said President Bush and his allies "are doing what they had threatened Iraq with... they want to expel Iraq from the 20th century".

It claimed that 21 days of allied air raids "targeted all scientific, economic and cultural installations, places of worship, and sacred sites". Allied air raids have caused severe food shortages in Iraq, forcing residents to pay more than £1,280 for a sack of flour, Iraq's national news agency Iran reported.

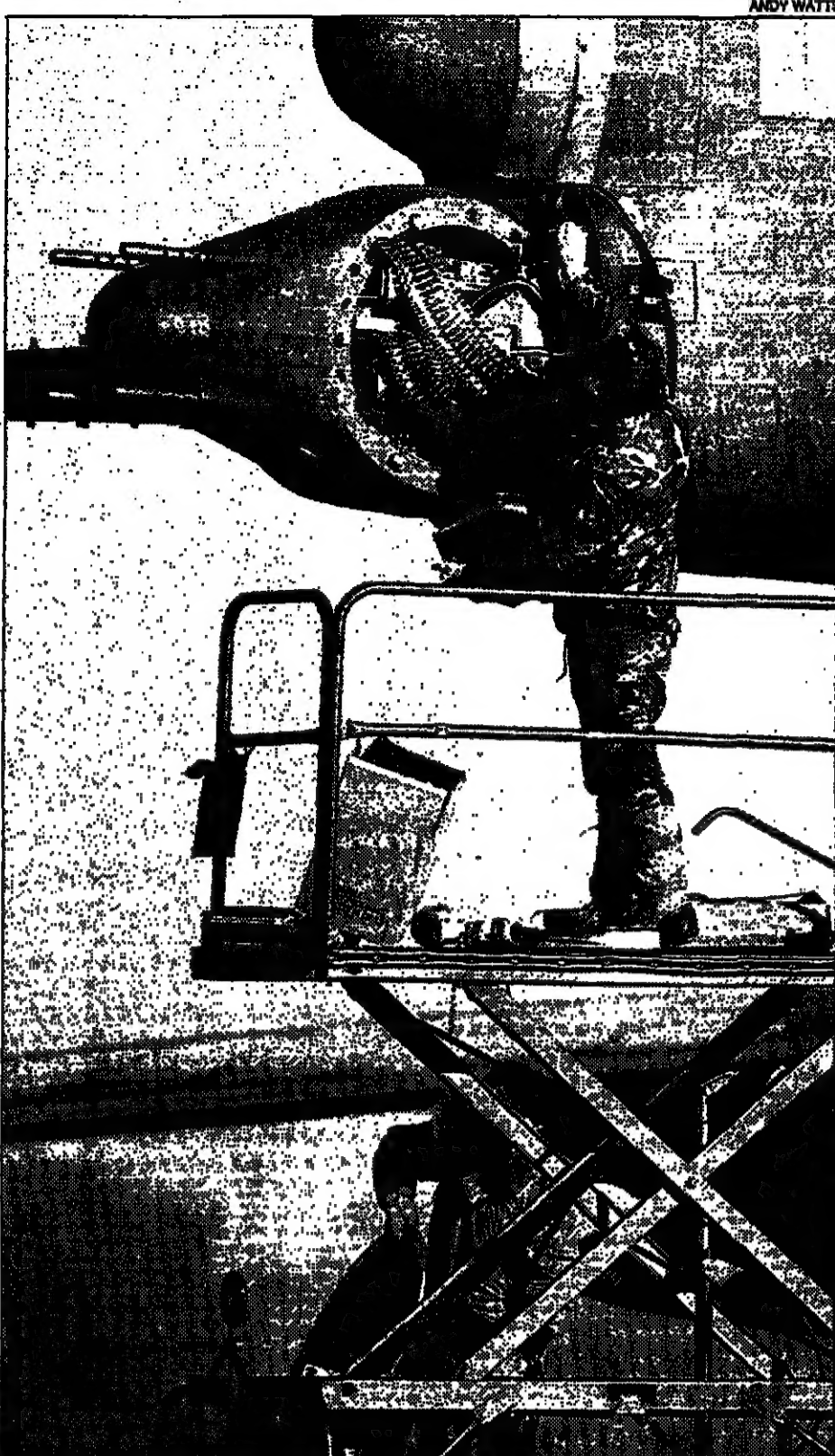
Allied aircraft yesterday knocked a 160ft span out of a key bridge across the river Tigris in Baghdad. Two American F15 fighters, on combat patrol, shot down two Iraqi MIG 21 jets and may have downed two SU 25 ground-attack planes, a military spokesman said.

"Preliminary reports indicate they were heading towards Iran," Brigadier-General Richard I. Neal said. He said 120 Iraqi planes had now sought safety in Iran.

British sources said last night that American B52 bombers had been switched from bombing the Republican Guard to targeting the Iraqi front-line forces in southern Kuwait. The B52s, which use a mixture of free-fall 1,000lb and 2,000lb bombs, and guided bombs, will now pound the front-line regular forces, the sources said.

Millions of Iraqis, calling on the Iraqis to surrender, have been dropped over Kuwait in the past few weeks, some of them warning that their time was coming for mass bombardment.

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Rear gun: a US serviceman fits an ammunition belt to a B-52 bomber at RAF Fairford

Labour MPs in Supper Club seek limits on war policy

By Philip Webster, chief political correspondent

LABOUR frontbenchers, including members of the shadow cabinet, have been meeting secretly to attempt to change the leadership's stance on the Gulf war.

MPs on the soft left have held regular meetings in a group called the Supper Club because they discuss tactics over an evening meal. They want to prevent the leadership supporting what they see as an extension of the aims of the war and they claim that up to 100 Labour MPs have reservations about the position taken by Neil Kinnock and Gerald Kaufman, shadow foreign secretary.

The Times has obtained minutes of a meeting of the group at the Commons on Monday. Supper Club members include John Prescott, the transport spokesman, Jo Richardson, spokesman on women's rights, and Michael Meacher, social security spokesman. Other frontbenchers in it include Clare Short, Mark Fisher, Joan Ruddock, and Frank Doran.

Mr Kinnock, who has learnt of the meetings, was reported last night to feel badly let down and furious about the behaviour of his colleagues. One member of the shadow cabinet was reported to have described the meetings as treacherous. Another said that those attending were guilty of "crass stupidity".

Senior Labour sources said that many of those attending had had the chance to discuss the party line in the shadow cabinet. Labour's national executive committee (NEC) or the parliamentary Labour party. Within days of those bodies reaching a stance, they were meeting in secret to undermine the leadership position, the sources said.

The group, formed at the

time of Mr Prescott's challenge for the deputy leadership, is worried that the leadership may use the part of United Nations resolution 678 that refers to the restoration of international peace and security as authority for backing the invasion of Iraq, the destruction of Saddam Hussein's military machine and even the toppling of the Iraqi dictator.

The leadership has emphasised that it does not support the toppling of Saddam as a war aim; but it has interpreted the resolution as meaning that war can proceed until Saddam can no longer threaten his neighbours.

Minutes of Monday's meeting, written by Mr Fisher, the arts spokesman, record those present as being "extremely



worried" that the phrase about restoring peace and security "could be used later, or interpreted now, as widening the war aims".

The meeting agreed that the MPs, as individuals, should seek out Mr Kinnock to "urge him to make clear in his speech that this phrase did not, and would not, be used to widen the war aims".

Mr Short, spokesman on social security, tabled an amendment to yesterday's meeting of the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) opposing extension of the war aims along the lines feared by the group, but in the event she withdrew it and the leadership's line was backed by a heavy majority.

However, Monday's meeting also agreed to plan for next Wednesday's PLP meeting by putting down a motion clarifying the commitment to "the most limited war aims".

The PLP last night heavily backed the line Mr Kinnock has taken throughout the confrontation.

Britain gets the shivers

Britain is shivering in the grip of the coldest snap for four years. Weather forecasters believe that day-time temperatures could remain below freezing for several days, with up to a foot of snow falling in the South-East. Page 20

Little credit

Hole-in-the-wall cash dispensers were criticised yesterday by the Consumers' Association which says that banks and building societies are too ready to believe the machine ahead of the human when there are discrepancies. Page 6

A good image

John Major's election as Conservative leader has transformed the party's image. The latest Mori poll for Times Newspapers shows a sharp difference in the number of people who believe that the Tories are too dominated by their leader. Page 7

Afrikaner plea

South Africa's Conservative party, enraged by the ending of apartheid, has stepped up demands for an independent Afrikaner homeland. Page 9

Baker worries



James Baker, the US Secretary of State, has urged Moscow to resume the path of reform. He criticised the crackdown in the Baltic republics and said: "Perestroika cannot succeed at gunpoint." Page 8

Propaganda leaflets play on Iraqi hunger

From Christopher Walker in Eastern Saudi Arabia

GULF allies have stepped up their psychological war against dug-in Iraqi troops in Kuwait to try to persuade large numbers to surrender before or soon after the land war begins.

In the latest move, millions of Arabic-language "invitation cards" illustrated with cartoons, above, have been dropped offering the hungry Iraqis traditional Arab hospitality if they cross the lines. The tactic has been supervised by Arab intelligence officers.

"The new card is designed to

play on the feeling of Arab brotherhood that we hope will survive this conflict," one Saudi official explained. "One of its strongest points will be the information we are now receiving that the Iraqi troops are running badly short of rations."

Adjacent to the thumb-nail sketch of smiling Iraqi deserters enjoying a sumptuous bowl of fresh fruit as well as Arabic coffee and tea, the card says: "You are invited to join the joint forces with the

Continued on page 20, col 1

Jaguar to cut 1,000 jobs as sales fall

By Kevin Eason

MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

THE luxury car company Jaguar yesterday moved to cut its workforce by more than 1,000 and radically reduce output as sales in Britain slumped.

January figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders showed total UK sales down by 20.8 per cent to 163,534, underlining the depth of the recession which is costing jobs and forcing thousands of car workers on to short-time.

The fact that Jaguar sales almost halved last month hastened the company's decision to lay off its 8,500 workers for two weeks out of every three until the end of March. Jaguar, which suffered a 25 per cent drop in sales in Britain last year, saw sales fall further from 1,530 in January 1990 to 806 last month.

While other carmakers in the luxury sector have been badly hit, the situation is so bad at Jaguar that analysts in the United States have told the firm's parent business, Ford, that it should sell off the company it bought only 18 months ago for £1.6 billion.

Unions will meet management today to learn details of a company plan to reduce the workforce by 1,000 in a voluntary severance scheme.

Tired Gorbachev makes television plea for unity

From Mary Dejevsky in Moscow

PRESIDENT Gorbachev, threatened with a huge boycott of his nationwide referendum on the future of the Soviet Union, appeared on Soviet television last night to appeal for unity and co-operation to save the integrity of the country.

Looking tired and stumbling several times over his script, Mr Gorbachev said that separatism threatened to "wrest many people from their homes and destroy a familiar way of life".

"My firm conviction," he said, "is the need to preserve the union." It offered "guaranteed security, a thriving market, powerful science and technology, a society based on justice and solidarity and a reliable future for all".

Six of the Soviet Union's 15 republics - the three Baltic states, Armenia, Georgia and

Moldavia - have said they have no intention of holding the referendum, while the Russian Federation is discussing the inclusion of additional questions which would enhance the republic's authority in relation to the centre.

The referendum, scheduled for March 17, asks all Soviet citizens whether they support a "renewed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" with equal rights for all republics and citizens.

Shortly before the president's address, the Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, emphasised the widening gap between the central authorities and the republic by announcing the appointment of a 23-member advisory team, many of whose members were closely associated with Mr Gorbachev in the early years of perestroika.

Pound goes above \$2

By Our City Staff

THE pound closed at more than two dollars in London yesterday for the first time in almost ten years. Sterling gained almost two cents to end at \$2.0010 as central banks in Europe had only limited success in preventing a continuation of the dollar's fall.

The dollar has been sliding since the end of last week when German interest rates

were raised and US rates reduced. Sterling was last above two dollars as a result of monetarist policy adopted by Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and 1980 which took interest rates up to 17 per cent.

Currency dealers attributed the \$2 pound to long-term weakness in the dollar.

Sterling soars, page 21

Abbado's fearful Philharmonic cancels London

By Simon Tait

ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Vienna Philharmonic, one of the world's leading symphony orchestras, has cancelled its concert at the Festival Hall in London on February 18 for fear of a terrorist attack on its British Airways flight. The orchestra is also trying to arrange a flight to Washington, its next booking, by an airline which is not British or American.

The decision to abandon the London concert was taken after a vote by the orchestra not to travel on routes which could be a target for terrorists. There is a growing alarm among orchestras at the prospect of travelling by such routes. This Saturday the St Louis Symphony Orchestra was to have given a concert at the Festival Hall but has also cancelled for fear of terrorist attack.

British Airways bookings on trans-

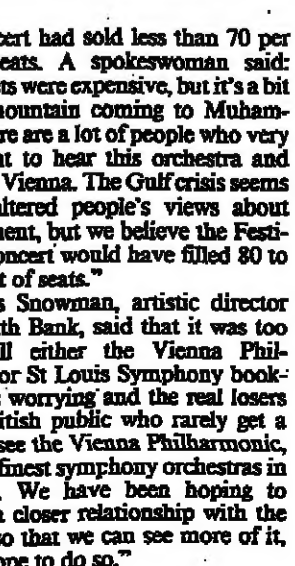
atlantic flights are 50 per cent down on normal. American companies have told executives not to fly to Britain, and celebrities in the United States such as Sylvester Stallone and Clint Eastwood have put off visits. The airline said, however, that bookings on European flights had not dropped significantly.

The Vienna Philharmonic, whose conductor Claudio Abbado is also the music director of the Berlin Philharmonic, was to have given a concert of Mozart and Mahler at the South Bank with top seat prices of £60, double that commanded by the main London orchestras. Last night the orchestra's agents, Harold Holt Ltd, said that it was hoped to reschedule the concert for May.

A South Bank concert by the Vienna Philharmonic in October, conducted by Riccardo Muti, sold only 72 per cent of tickets, but Harold Holt denied that the real reason for cancellation was that the

latest concert had sold less than 70 per cent of seats. A spokeswoman said: "The tickets were expensive, but it's a bit like the mountain coming to Muhammad - there are a lot of people who very much want to hear this orchestra and can't go to Vienna. The Gulf crisis seems to have altered people's views about entertainment, but we believe the Festival Hall concert would have filled 80 to 90 per cent of seats."

Nicholas Snowman, artistic director of the South Bank, said that it was too late to fill either the Vienna Philharmonic or St Louis Symphony bookings. "It is worrying and the real losers are the British public who rarely get a chance to see the Vienna Philharmonic, one of the finest symphony orchestras in the world. We have been hoping to negotiate a closer relationship with the orchestra so that we can see more of it, and still hope to do so."



Abbado: hopes concert can be rescheduled

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Strategy in the limelight keeps Saddam's advisers in the dark

JOURNALISTS may be frustrated about the management of Gulf war news but no one could accuse the Americans of carrying out a secret war. Almost every move, from the arrival time of reinforcements to the deployment positions of carrier battle groups, and now the clear hint of an approaching land battle, have been promulgated, either by television cameras in Riyadh and Washington or in briefings by officials in Pentagon backrooms.

How, one might ask, can President Saddam Hussein be duped or surprised if he knows what to expect round every corner? Take, for example, the speculation that American and British forces might be involved in a flanking manoeuvre to the far west, across the Saudi-Iraqi border, bypassing the "Maginot line" in southern Kuwait and advancing into Iraq to cut off the Republican Guard divisions from the rear. Although no one in

authority has outlined such a strategy, enough information has been given to add credence to the reports.

It is now believed, for example, that the British 1st Armoured Division is no longer under the tactical command of the US marines. Until fairly recently the 27,000 men and 170 Challenger tanks of the British division were located with the marines north of Jubayl. Now the 1st Armoured Division has a new tactical commander. The British soldiers have moved to another part of the Saudi desert and are being merged with a very different US corps, equipped with M1A1 tanks, 155mm artillery and multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS). This new "mix and match" could indicate a change in allied planning, the first clear hint, perhaps, that a flanking manoeuvre to the west might pose the greatest threat to Saddam's forces. Might this spur

How could the Iraqi leader be taken by surprise, when every allied move is examined by the camera in a television war? Michael Evans suggests an answer

Saddam to launch an offensive with seven or eight divisions before General Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander, is able to put his plan into practice?

The answers to these questions provide an insight into the way the allied campaign has been waged and also underline the way General Schwarzkopf has included a large degree of flexibility in his planning, to enable force deployments to be switched as events unfold.

First, the almost daily announcements in Washington about troop deployments, possible timings of a ground war and the state of US military readiness have been unavoidable because

this is a television war. Announcements are made with American media deadlines in mind. British officials concede that since this is largely an American war — in terms of forces deployed to the Gulf — it has to be conducted in "the American way", with plenty of fanfare and trumpeting and the odd appalling indiscretion. Certain senior British officials have been heard to ask: "Why can't these American generals keep quiet?"

Second, the allied command consists of forces from 28 countries, some of them participating for such overtly political reasons that President Bush has had to

spend a lot of his time keeping them in the know, writing letters to encourage them that the ground war is about to start — "by the third week of February", according to his letter to President Mubarak of Egypt — and then allowing his aides to spill the beans to the rest of the world, Baghdad included.

However, this openness is not as innocent as it might seem. When an American or British commander reveals — before the cameras that allied air raids have destroyed a certain number of Iraqi tanks or artillery, preferably with pictures to back up the claim — one of the aims is to get the message across to the Baath headquarters command in Baghdad, in case, as seems highly likely, they are not full aware of what is going on in the theatre of operations. "We want them to know what is happening," one senior British official said. "We want them to know that there are

22 bridges down and that the Republican Guards have suffered another 500 saturation bombing raids."

So, too, a suspicion in Baghdad that British and American heavy armour may be congregating to consider diverting some of his best units, even the Republican Guard, to new positions to counter such a move. But if he orders any of his units to change positions, they will immediately be vulnerable to air bombardment. He dare not ask the Republican Guard to come out from the bunkers until the ground war has begun. By then it might be too late. So, hints of changing allied strategy could cause uncertainty in Baghdad. Herein lies the potential for an allied surprise attack.

As for Saddam's option of mounting a large-scale offensive across the border, it cannot be ruled out. But when the smaller-

scale raids were launched last week at one particular point, a long, armoured convoy making its way to the border had great difficulty getting through the elaborate minefields and other obstacles constructed by their own forces.

One tactical gaffe: why does everyone now know that allied tanks have yellow ribbons attached to make sure that Soviet-made tanks in the coalition forces are not mistaken for Iraqi tanks? Iraq has already demonstrated its expertise in deception and decoy, placing cardboard tanks and missiles among the real ones. Presumably all Iraqi tanks are now flying yellow ribbons. Even though the colour of the allied ribbons will change from day to day when the ground war begins, there would seem to be plenty of scope here for confusion.

Daily recipe, page 14

WASHINGTON

Allies draw up blueprint for just peace in Middle East

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

JAMES Baker, the US Secretary of State, yesterday unveiled Washington's preliminary thinking on how to achieve a lasting post-war Middle East peace, making it clear that the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq would be a central part of that process.

His testimony to the House of Representatives foreign affairs committee is thought to have closely mirrored the conclusions of a day-long meeting between leading British and American officials held behind closed doors at the State Department on Monday, the first such consultations the administration has held with another country.

Though officials were reluctant to discuss that meeting, it is understood that both teams agreed that new, strengthened Middle East security structures would be essential after the war but that the American and British military presences should be reduced as quickly as possible. If there was a point of difference, one American source suggested, it was over the British preference for an international peace conference to resolve the Palestinian issue.

Mr Baker told the congressmen that to "redeem the sacrifices" of allied servicemen who would die in the Gulf "we must fashion a peace which is worthy of their struggle", but acknowledged that the war had stirred "the deepest passions" and that "tough times lie ahead". He identified five

separate challenges. The first was to develop new security arrangements for the Gulf that would deter aggression, preserve territorial security and facilitate the peaceful resolutions of disputes. The Gulf states should take the lead in developing these arrangements, but Iran and Iraq and other regional powers should participate. He raised the possibility of some kind of permanent peace-keeping force, possibly under UN auspices.

The second challenge was to reverse years of conventional and non-conventional arms proliferation in the Middle East, and that included preventing the rebuilding of Iraq's military machine.

The third was the region's economic reconstruction and recovery, with emphasis not just on Kuwait but also on Iraq. "The time of reconstruction and recovery should not be the occasion for vengeful actions against a nation forced to war as a result of a dictator's ambition. The secure and prosperous future everyone hopes to see in the Gulf has got to include Iraq," he said. The West's role could include the promotion of free trade and growth-oriented policies and "region-wide economic co-operation".

A fourth challenge was to resolve once and for all the Palestinian problem through a peace based on "enduring respect, tolerance and mutual trust". Mr Baker said: "Let's not fool ourselves. The course of this crisis has stirred emotions among Israelis and Palestinians that will not yield easily to conciliation."

Security should not be viewed just in military terms, he said. "We are not going to have lasting peace and well-being in the absence of sound economic growth. We're not going to have sound economic growth if nations are threatened or invaded or if they are squandering precious resources on more and more arms."

The final challenge, he said, was for the United States to develop a comprehensive energy strategy to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil.

Mr Baker emphasised that new settlements could not simply be imposed on the Middle East, and that there had to be extensive consultations with every nation involved in the conflict.

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MOSCOW

Gorbachev Gulf policy attacked

FROM ROBERT SEELY AND MARY DEWEY IN MOSCOW

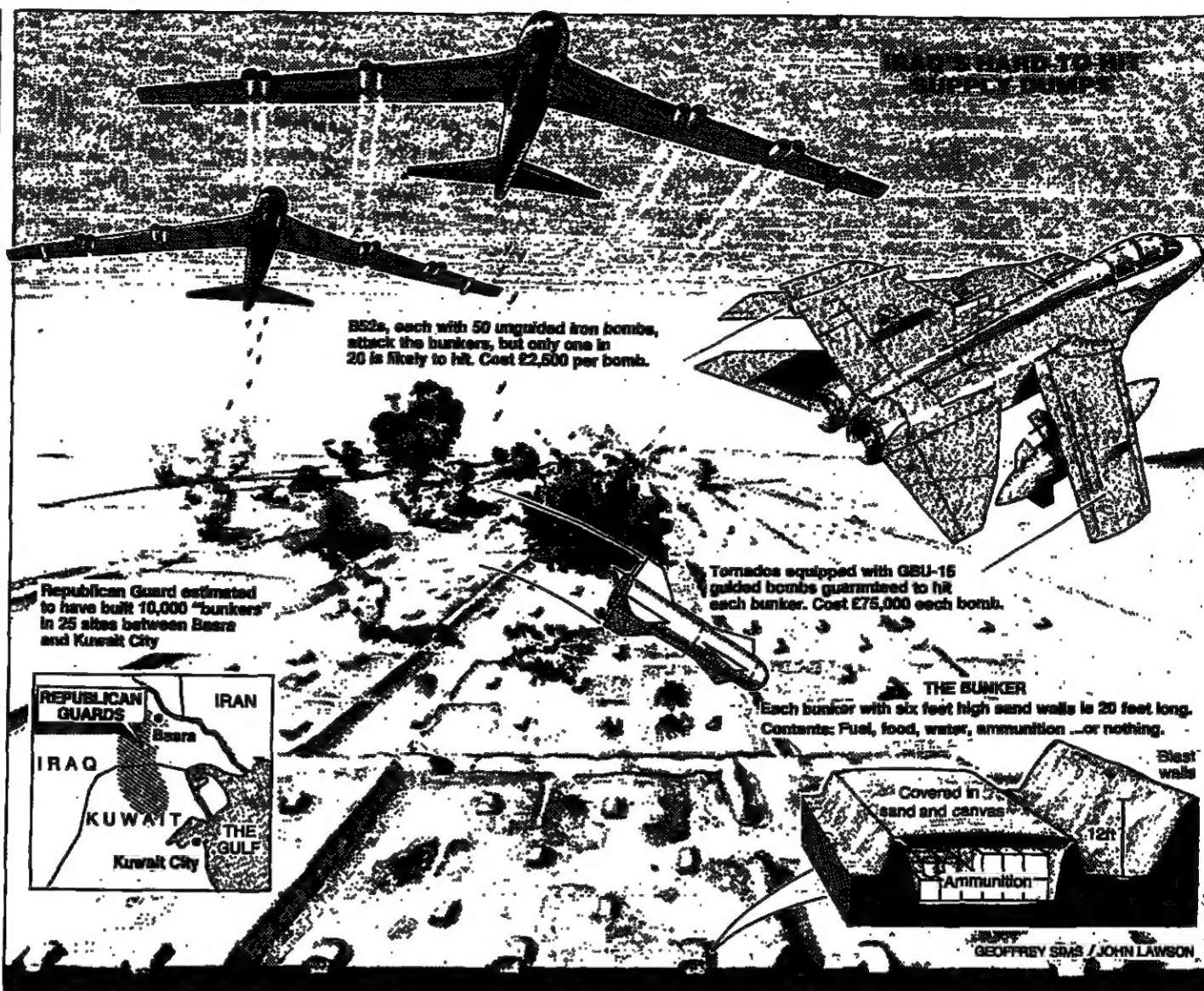
SENIOR Soviet strategists yesterday attacked President Gorbachev's Gulf war policy, urging greater support for Iraq. They voiced their criticism of Soviet policy at a meeting with Arab ambassadors, including Iraq's, at the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mission in Moscow.

"We signed a treaty with Iraq to fight against imperialism and Zionism. Now our mouths are closed and we are not allowed to remind ourselves of the clauses of that treaty," said Stanislav Korolev, professor at the military institute of the Ministry of Defence, referring to the Soviet Union's 1972 treaty with Iraq.

Sections of the Soviet military and political establishment are furious at the policy first pursued by the ex-foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, which tied Soviet Gulf policy to the United Nations resolutions, effectively sanctioning Western intervention.

A backstage struggle to alter the passive Soviet support for the US-led coalition has been under way since Mr Shevardnadze's first meetings with the US Secretary of State, James Baker, immediately after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Major-General Viktor Filatov, a military academic, told ambassadors: "The incapable foreign ministry under Shevardnadze made all the world our enemy."

Meanwhile, a four-day visit to Moscow by the Syrian defence minister drew to an end yesterday with expressions of Soviet-Syrian agreement on the war. According to the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman, Vitali Churkin, the two sides expressed "decisive condemnation" of Iraqi aggression and its refusal to withdraw its troops from Kuwait.



BATTLE TACTICS

Iraqi deception costly for allies

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

THE Iraqis have well learned the Russian art of *maskirovka*, a deception technique — and their skill is presenting the allies with a complex and costly tactical problem which could delay the start of the land offensive. Throughout northern Kuwait and southern Iraq the Republican Guard have built at least 25 huge supply dumps which, from the air, appear to be row upon row of ammunition bunkers.

Coalition air forces have mounted round-the-clock bombing sorties against the positions and the French have even released pictures of the emplacements showing the damage caused by their Jaguar strike aircraft against them. Analysts now believe that many of the bunkers are decoys designed around the Russian deception technique now used widely by the Iraqi army.

Some of the bunkers, little more than sand scrapes dug six feet into the desert and surrounded by six

feet high sand walls, do contain ammunition. Others are filled with fuel, food, or water. But up to half are empty, and it is impossible to tell from the air just which is which.

Each of the bunkers — and there could be as many as 10,000 — could be individually destroyed by "smart" bombs such as the GBU-15 which are designed to take out small targets. The pilot of the aircraft can guide the bomb from a simple control column in his cockpit and virtually guarantee accuracy to within a few feet. Each GBU-15 bomb costs \$150,000 (£78,000) and even in a war where cost appears not to be a consideration, such wasteful expenditure is wasteful.

The alternative is to "carpet bomb" the entire area with iron bombs costing up to \$5,000 each and which can be dropped by B52s. But these bombs do not approach the accuracy of a smart bomb.

ALLIED FORCES

SORTIES: More than 46,000 allied air missions have been flown since the war began.

LOSSES: Allies have lost 42 missing in action, including 24 Americans, eight British and one Italian. 30 killed in action, including 12 Americans and 18 Saudis. 22 Americans are listed as non-combat deaths.

Further 108 American non-combat deaths in Operation Desert Shield before the war. Twelve prisoners of war, including two British, 27 allied planes lost, 21 in combat — 14 American, five British, one Kuwaiti and one Italian.

CLAIMS: U.S. F-15 fighters shot down two Iraqi MiG-21 jets and may have downed two SU-26 ground-attack planes trying to flee to Iran. An Iraqi patrol boat was sunk and two others apparently escaped in a clash with Saudi coastal patrol craft during the battle for Khafji last week.

An allied aircraft destroyed a Scud missile launcher in northwest Iraq. British Tornados and Buccaneers jets destroyed four more bridges and French planes continued bombing raids on Iraqi Republican Guard positions. The Al-Jomhuriya bridge, a key bridge over the Tigris in central Baghdad, has been destroyed by missiles. By allied estimates 10% of Iraqi Army material has been destroyed including 127 planes, 48 naval

units, 500 tanks, 37 armoured troop transport vehicles, 400 artillery pieces and 178 vehicles. 850 Iraqis have been taken prisoner.

Israel stepped up its air campaign against the PLO in Lebanon. Eleven guerrilla bases have now been destroyed.

IRAQI FORCES

CLAIMS: Iraq said allies had carried out 283 more air raids and missile attacks yesterday and claimed two warplanes and one missile had been shot down. Baghdad radio said that the attacks did not achieve any of their objectives. The radio station accused allied forces of trying to "bomb Iraq out of the 20th century" and said that terrorist attacks against Western targets would increase.

Iraqi authorities said that about 150 people were killed by an allied air raid on the southern city of Nassariyah.

ALLIED WAR AIMS

UN Security Council resolution 678 authorises Kuwait's allies to "use all necessary means" to uphold previous resolutions calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate government. Resolution 678 also calls on the nations assisting Kuwait "to restore international peace and security in the area".

Syrians in move to get Scuds from Pyongyang

A REPORTED new arms deal between Syria, Libya and North Korea, involving the sale of ballistic missiles to Damascus, has raised new fears that some countries in the Middle East are taking steps to improve their own military capabilities while the rest of the world is focusing on the war with Iraq.

According to intelligence sources, Pyongyang will sell Syria "dozens" of Scud C missiles — known as Scud PIP in North Korea — an adaptation of the Soviet Scud B, which has been fired against Israel and Saudi Arabia in the present conflict.

The sources said that, unlike the two Iraqi-modified versions of the missile, which have a reduced warhead, the North Korean Scud C has been extensively redesigned to carry a far greater 1,100 lb warhead.

The North Koreans have demanded full payment in cash on delivery, the sources said.

The Syrians asked Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, for help and he is understood to have agreed to finance the sale, on condition that he got 40 per cent of the missiles — terms similar to a deal with China last year.

Syrian promise

London — Although the progress of the war was the primary subject when Farouk al-Shara, the Syrian foreign minister, met Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, yesterday, Mr Shara also promised that his government would do its best to secure the release of British hostages in Lebanon. Mr Shara accused President Saddam Hussein of living in a "world of illusion" and said that his stance would lead only to more destruction and casualties.

US chemical hint

Geneva — The United States has no intention of ruling out the use of chemical weapons if Iraq attacks coalition forces with them, Stephen Ledogar, a chief US arms negotiator, said in an interview published yesterday. "The US position is that we will never be the first to use chemical weapons. On the other hand, if chemical weapons are first used on us or on our immediate allies in a conflict, we reserve the right to retaliate with chemical weapons." (Reuters)

World war fear

Paris — Seven out of 10 French people think the Gulf conflict could degenerate into a third world war, according to an opinion poll by the BVA group for the weekly magazine *Paris Match*. It gave no indication how those responding thought a world war might break out but 70 per cent said it could happen. A total of 27 per cent did not believe a world conflict would result from the Gulf war, while 3 per cent had no opinion. (Reuters)

Restoring image

Brussels — The Belgian government is campaigning to improve its standing among allies who have criticised its reluctant commitment to the Gulf war. Wilfried Martens, the prime minister, has made a television broadcast telling Belgians to face their responsibilities and a speech to the World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland. The foreign ministry held a briefing yesterday to rebut charges that Belgium's response has been ambivalent and feeble.

Weather break

London — Public weather forecasts for the Gulf region have been suspended by the Meteorological Office at Bracknell, Berkshire, on the ground that forecasts might give Iraq clues to the possible timing of an allied land attack. But Iraqi commanders are unlikely to be fretting over the suspension of British forecasts. "The MoD are living in the Victorian era. Anyone can get pictures from satellites," said a sceptical source at the Met Office.

CNN complex no joke for armchair war addicts

NEW YORK NOTEBOOK by Charles Bremner

I was bound to happen. American psychiatrists have diagnosed a new behavioural disorder called "the CNN complex". Otherwise healthy citizens are said to be succumbing to an addiction to the Cable News Network and its 24-hour news on the Gulf war.

"We've found that some people have become anxious when they're away from the coverage," Dr James Turner, of the Memorial Medical Centre in Savannah, Georgia, said. "They're worn out physically and mentally from riding the roller-coaster of every rumour." CNN addicts are said to get an adrenalin high without the risk and patients are being put on a low-CNN diet.

The medical complaints about CNN are not the only ones. Three weeks into the war the network is taking fire from friend and foe alike for its coverage of the first "real-time" war. Polls show that most people believe Peter Arnett of CNN, the lone

aged and polished version traditionally delivered by ABC, NBC and CBS.

CNN executives say this is simply sour grapes or blaming the messenger for the message. Anyway, they say, it is too late to "disinvent" the technology that has made the company the electronic bulletin board used by all sides in the Gulf war.

P perhaps the CNN debate is merely a symptom of an irony that is becoming more and more apparent in America: despite the huge coverage, very little news has emerged from the Gulf. Thanks to tight official control and the remote operations, the conflict has so far been defined through a few graphic images such as flashes in the night sky.

"It's really the first war that reporters aren't allowed to get close enough to really cover," *Newsweek* magazine said. The lack of visible blood and low casualty figures have started to breed a more light-hearted ap-

proach on the home front. Gulf slang has become hip from office memes to the late-night talk shows. "Scud-off" is a new put-down in school playgrounds.

Television comedians are gingerly inserting Gulf gags in their routines, most of them innocuous or anti-Iraq. Bill McCarty, a stand-up comic, mocks the idea of an Iraqi terrorist strike in New York, a city where most taxi-drivers come from the Third World. "They want to come here, they want to terrorise people, they want to wreck havoc! Let them drive a cab like everyone else," he says.

Some of the comics have a sharper edge. George Tingle, a night-club performer, mimics President Bush in prayer: "We're Americans," he intones. "We're entitled to 12 miles to the gallon, Lord." Mr Tingle gets big laughs with his line that Kuwait has less oil than Exxon spilled last year. "We should just have invaded Exxon. They're right on 51st Street and

the cost of the war would be a four-dollar cab ride."

During past wars, soldiers have left their wives with babies before going off to fight. In this war, thousands of American servicemen have done the next best thing, visiting sperm banks. Commercial companies are reporting a rush of visits from departing servicemen anxious to ensure progeny should they die or be disabled. "It is a way for some men to take action when they are feeling helpless, a way to leave a part of themselves behind, a way to find meaning in their life," Gary Emery, a Los Angeles psychologist, said.

Most of the sperm is being left by married men, apparently on their wives' insistence according to the banks. But a substantial number of unmarried donors are also reported to be turning up. The California Cryobank is offering special rates to military men, charging \$90 (£45) for six months' storage instead of the usual \$300.



American correspondent in Baghdad, is merely serving Iraqi propaganda. Conservatives have taken to calling the network "Scudvision", or, as one of them said this week, it is a forum for Baghdad to turn public opinion against the United States.

The rival networks, miffed at CNN's glory, are sniping at the wisdom of delivering non-stop raw, unedited news, a very different product from the pack-

FRONT LINE

Rehearsal for battle pleases the elusive brigadier

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON WITH THE 7TH ARMOUR BRIGADE

IN PITCH darkness, the largest operational concentration of British military power assembled since the second world war is preparing for what could be the last big field exercise before the allied ground assault on Iraq's defensive line is launched.

For Brigadier Patrick Cordingley, commander of the 7th Armoured Brigade, it amounts to a full dress rehearsal for the day when his units move forward to make contact with the enemy.

This is the first time the brigade has been involved in a full divisional exercise with the rest of the British 1st Armoured Division, and the potential for what the brigade calls "Murphy's" — from Murphy's law, stating that if anything can go wrong, it will — is considerable.

Manoeuvring several thousand vehicles in the tightly confined exercise zone requires the most intricate advance planning. The sheer volume of traffic being shepherded into separate approach lanes, the juggling of refuelling points and form-up positions, and the timing of convoy runs mean that any serious deviation from schedules could turn the operation sour with disastrous speed.

On the eve of the exercise, Brigadier Cordingley briefed the key officers in his order group in the cramped, dimly lit command post consisting of a group of tracked vehicles parked back to back and enveloped in camouflage netting. Inside each of them sits a team of specialists, poring over large-scale maps of the brigade's probable target area while phones beep non-stop and radio traffic crackles faintly in the background. It is here that the essential knitting together of different arms and echelons of the brigade takes place, with Brigadier Cordingley presiding over the process rather like one imagines the chairman of the board of a big multinational corporation would conduct his business.

For production lines, market research, distribution and sales, read the artillery, the engineers, air liaison and forecasts from the meteorological and the chemical warfare branches. The difference of course, is that thousands of British lives will be at stake when the 7th Armoured Brigade goes into action: small mistakes, marginal oversights even, could have bloody consequences. "This exercise is all about fine-tuning, knocking

out every snag as it comes up instead of risking an accumulation of cock-ups on the day," Brigadier Cordingley observed, adjusting his angular frame more comfortably against the door of an armoured vehicle.

Each of the officers present — some trim and fit and as smartly turned out as campaigning permits, others reassuringly dishevelled — has his clearly defined responsibilities. But the buck stops with him, now and on the day fighting begins.

Once the exercise is under way, Brigadier Cordingley is constantly on the move, racing alongside a column in his Land Rover, leaping out to chivvy a startled military police corporal over traffic flow, ducking into the main signals post: his driver (who postponed university entrance to come back and serve with the brigade) occasionally complains of the difficulty of being in the right place at the right time for so elusive a boss. The brigadier's personal tank, a Challenger, is always on hand in battle line.

A helicopter ride over the main assembly area with Brigadier Cordingley just before dusk provided a breathtaking bird's eye view of a modern army forming up for a move.

Somewhere in the darkness Brigadier Cordingley escaped us in his tank, churning off to observe some other aspect of the operation. We did not catch up with him until after dawn next day. Tired, unshaven but clearly very chipper, he was collared by BBC television's Martin Bell to pass judgement on the night's events. "Absolutely delighted," he declared, steaming mug of tea in one hand. "I've never been involved in a more complicated affair and although there were the inevitable Murphys, I think the whole thing went off extremely well."

Of course, it would be different and more difficult under enemy fire, he agreed, but in the main objective of the exercise had been to identify the areas in which the brigade should put in a final bout of training.

So is the real thing now just around the corner? Brigadier Cordingley played his famous straight bat: "I know the men are anxious to get it over with if we have to do the business, but you see the air war is obviously going very well and I'm sure we are all happy to see that carry on."

(This report is subject to allied military reporting restrictions)



Rain of bombs: crater-making explosives and mines parachuting down onto their target. The RAF is rapidly using up its supply of these JP-233 bombs, which have proved successful in destroying Iraqi air-strips, with no chance of replacement (Harvey Elliott writes). The weapons, which are dropped from Tornados, are designed to penetrate the thick concrete of runways and then scatter anti-personnel mines to prevent engineers from repairing them. Hunting Engineering, which produced thousands of the bombs, mainly for the RAF, over the last six years, is closing down the production line with no further orders in the offing. "Regrettably the Americans decided not to join us in the project and once the last export order is fulfilled we will have to close down the production line," said a company official yesterday. "We will, however, keep all the jigs and tools necessary to start again and could reopen the line within a matter of months if asked."

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Raids become routine but the aircrews cannot relax

FROM LIN JENKINS IN THE GULF

NOT even the comfort of routine could mask the tension as Tornados aircrews prepared to fly into Iraq yesterday in the knowledge that radar activity on the ground had increased.

While the experience of several missions had calmed many nerves, the news that each crew was being watched more closely from the ground intensified the pre-flight anxiety. Nobody tried to reason why, or guess what President Saddam Hussein's next move might be, but each crewman soberly assessed his own thoughts and concentrated on the complex process of planning a mission.

As the Tornados lined up on the taxi way accompanied by two Victors, the petrol stations of the sky, there seemed barely room for them to move. A civilian cargo aircraft landed, a Sea Stallion helicopter hovered 30ft above the runway, and a US navy recon-

naissance plane took off before the Tornados could race off down the airfield with a deafening roar. Their departure allowed no relaxation in the activities of the 1,500-strong team whose work is essential to keep those who sit in the pilot's and navigator's seat airborne. On the far side of the air base bombs were being prepared as far away as possible from where other ground crews were working on the last aircraft to have landed. The aim was to have the planes ready to fly again within two hours.

In Billy Smart's, the colourful tent which houses the canteen, men on their break queued for lunch. Wing Commander John Broadbent visibly relaxed when he climbed from his aircraft, flying helmet in hand, and announced that his mission, destroying an Iraqi road bridge, had been successful. Unable like everyone else to predict Saddam's next move, he insisted that the success of his 10 sorties did not engender complacency.

"My ability to cope with the pressures is improving, but that is only what you would expect as you get more experience and comfortable with your own feelings. There is still plenty of danger out there and we have not dropped our guard by any stretch of the imagination," he said.

"There are a lot of things out there which clearly have the potential to hurt you. As far as we can gather he still has half of his air force surviving, you can never discount a second punch. The fact that we have flown essentially

unopposed in the air for the past three weeks does not mean that at some stage some kind of gesture is not worthwhile. I don't want to be on the receiving end of that gesture, thank you very much."

Other pilots told yesterday how they have come to terms with the possibility that Iraqi civilians might be killed during allied raids on bridges. Squadron Leader Ricky Cobelli and Flight Lieutenant Jeremy Tank said: "Our aim is to get the Iraqis out of Kuwait. The only way we are going to do it is to cut their supply lines."

Their attack on two bridges in a built-up area was launched at a time when traffic would have been at its heaviest. Squadron Leader Cobelli said, however, that an attack on an urban bridge was exactly the same as targeting oil refineries and airfields, which they had done before the change of allied tactics. "Yes, there will be civilian traffic, but they could well be civilian contractors working on an airfield," he said.

Flight Lieutenant Paddy Teakle had just completed his eleventh sortie of Operation Desert Storm. "You do get more confident, the initial raids were clearly quite frightening, but there are still many threats. It is the surface to air missiles at medium to high range which are the most threat, but none of us knows what might happen next."

What he does know, like the other aircrews, is that he is likely to find out within the next few days. (This report is subject to allied military reporting restrictions)

KUWAITI AIR FORCE

Pilots' dilemma as homeland hit

FROM TONY WINTON IN SAUDI ARABIA

FOR a small group of Desert Storm pilots flying bombing missions inside Kuwait, the target is not enemy territory but home.

One of these pilots, Lieutenant Talal Mudhar, said on Tuesday that Kuwaitis were used to attack Iraqi positions in their own country because they knew the terrain best. Three weeks into the war, after several missions to drop 500lb bombs on his homeland, he accepts the need for the destruction he and his compatriots inflict on Kuwait.

"It won't be our home (again) if we don't bomb it," he said. "We're not too happy about it. It's not something anybody would like to do, really — bomb their own country. If we're asked to do something worse, we would, just to get our land back... even if there's nothing left of it."

Kuwaiti pilots flew 15 Mirage F1 fighters, 20 A4 Skyhawks, six Hawk trainers and 15 French-made Gazelle helicopters to Saudi Arabia last August 3, the day after Iraq seized their country.

American pilots who fly with the Kuwaitis say they sympathise with their colleagues. "How would you feel, wherever you're from, having to go in there and bomb your own country?" asked Captain Mike Kennedy, an F15 pilot. "Bomb what you've paid a lot of money, a lot of time to build up. And now you're going in there and taking it down. That can't be fun."

Captain Kennedy, attached to the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, stood beside a row of Kuwaiti planes with the words

"Free Kuwait" stencilled on their fuselages. "Bombing anybody's country shouldn't put a smile on anybody's face," he said.

The Kuwaiti pilots said they often flew repeated sorties against the same or similar targets, and that assessing results was difficult. "Everytime we go there, they hear the planes, they hide, so therefore you don't know what you've done," Lieutenant Mudhar said.

But, whatever the damage, it was worth the cost, he said. "It hurts, but you know the end result will be good. You'll have a place to be. You can live somewhere you'd be proud of. It's better than not having a country."

(This report is subject to allied military reporting restrictions)

LEBANON

Israelis step up attacks on PLO bases

FROM JUAN CARLOS GUMUCIO IN BEIRUT

ISRAEL yesterday stepped up its air campaign against pro-Iraqi Palestinian guerrillas in southern Lebanon with lightning helicopter attacks that raised to 11 the number of PLO bases destroyed in two days.

Witnesses in the Iqlim al-Toufiah region southeast of Sidon said four gunships attacked two command posts in the villages of Sarba and Houmine with rockets hours after Palestinian guerrillas fired six Katyusha rockets into Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone". There was no immediate word on casualties. Both bases belonged to Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, which on Tuesday lost nine guerrillas in the most intense Israeli air raid for several years.

Yesterday's helicopter attack came as the Lebanese army, in a mission bound to put the Lebanese government in crossfire between the PLO and Israel, began deploying 2,000 troops to the south. The most crucial test for President Hrawi's plan to extend his authority in the south will come today if government troops go ahead with the plan to move into the Iqlim al-Toufiah, or Apple province. There, some 1,200 PLO guerrillas have established a new platform for rocket attacks against Israel in solidarity with Iraq's missile attacks on the Jewish state.

The pro-Iranian Hezbollah and the mainstream Shia Muslim Amal militia, who are also entrenched in the area, have said they will not oppose the army deployment. But Mr Hrawi has not received clear assurances from the PLO and prospects of Palestinian co-operation look dim.

Israel has made it clear that it will hold Lebanon responsible for any guerrilla rocket attack or infiltration attempt and its proxy force, the South Lebanon Army militia, this week gave a warning that Lebanese troops may die in its retaliatory attacks.

● JERUSALEM: The Israeli authorities have restored the press credentials of the Newweek bureau chief in Israel, suspended because the weekly magazine printed a photograph violating military censorship.

The Israeli government press office said yesterday it had restored Theodore Stanger's accreditation on Tuesday after it became clear that the picture in the magazine's February 4 issue came from a photograph agency. It was considering whether to take steps against the agency. (Reuter)



The party as un-American activity

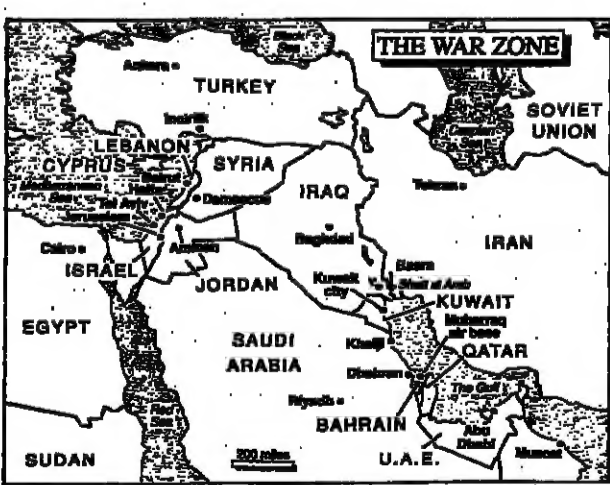
This is the cancellation of the year by the magazine of the decade and it represents the latest ravage by a most un-American virus. Inappropriateness. There is seemingly no event that can be sure of retaining its meanness while the Gulf war rages. The scrapping of the Vanity Fair binge is as telling as any, not only because it exports Inappropriateness to the United Kingdom, but also because of the identity of its would-be hosts... Tina Brown who, in an earlier role as editor of Tatler in London, had raised socialising to a kind of vocation.

Alan Franks finds an English woman in New York and New York in an English woman

Plus...

The British attitude to sex, Max Ernst's painted attitudes to war, David Bailey on fashion photography, Hardy Amies recalls a fashion for thinking Hitler was marvellous

The Times on Saturday: fine writing, among other delicacies



JORDAN

Media slurs provoke broadside from UK

FROM EDWARD GORMAN IN AMMAN

THE British ambassador to Jordan, concerned at the increasingly pro-Iraqi stance of the Amman media, publicly rejected yesterday allegations that detained Iraqis in Britain have been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.

Anthony Reeve took the unusual step of releasing the text of a letter he sent to Al-Rai, the leading Arabic daily, in which he refutes claims published by that newspaper that Iraqis have been treated like criminals in Britain as part of a racist policy in violation of all international laws.

So far the paper has declined to publish or even acknowledge the ambassador's letter, publishing instead what one source described as another "abusive" article.

The decision to reveal the text comes amid concern among Western diplomats that Jordanian newspapers and television are becoming slavishly pro-Iraqi and, according to

one envoy, are now virtually indistinguishable from domestic Baghdad media.

Envoys fear that ordinary Jordanians, already militant in their support for Baghdad, are not being given a balanced view of the war and that a defeat for President Saddam Hussein could come not only as a surprise but as a deep shock, possibly sparking an even bigger backlash than that which followed the defeat of Nasser in the six-day war of 1967.

Mr Reeve was replying to an article on January 29 by Jumaa Hammad, an Al-Rai columnist who claimed that, while Western nationals held in Iraq enjoy a luxurious lifestyle in five-star hotels, Iraqis in Britain are being interrogated like prisoners of war, being kept in isolation from the rest of society and treated in an inhuman manner.

Mr Hammad said Britain was openly and flagrantly exercising a racist policy in violation of all international law and that this was a sign of the new world order to come

as a result of American and British "aggression" against Iraq.

In his reply, dated January 31, Mr Reeve points out that all Iraqis detained in Britain have been treated as protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention and that British ministers have underlined their determination to comply with all the government's obligations under the terms of the convention. Visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross have been carried out and further inspections of conditions under which Iraqis are being held will take place later this month.

Of 33 Iraqis detained on January 25 who were studying at British universities under the sponsorship of the Iraqi military attaché, all but one have been identified as serving military officers, all had admitted this to be the case, and all were being treated as prisoners of war under the Third Geneva Convention.

By contrast, Mr Reeve notes, allied airmen held in Iraq have been denied access to the ICRC. "Nor has

the ICRC been notified of the names of any of these airmen," Mr Reeve writes.

"Instead the prisoners have been interviewed on television to make statements apparently obtained under duress. This is directly contrary to articles 13 and 17 of the Third Geneva Convention, which state that prisoners of war must be protected at all times against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity."

Mr Reeve also criticised Iraq's decision to send prisoners to "strategic sites" and notes claims that some have been wounded and one killed as a result. This, he says, is also in direct violation of the Third Geneva Convention.

"The British government look to the Iraqi authorities to recognise the humanitarian needs of the families of the captured prisoners of war and to take immediate action to fulfil Iraq's obligations in this respect, in the same way as Britain's obligations are being fully met," the ambassador concludes.

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Lilley: hopes to stimulate research by smaller firms

Lilley launches £32m boost to industrial research

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A £32 MILLION scheme to stimulate more company investments in research and development was launched yesterday by the trade and industry department amid concern that key areas of industry are failing to spend enough.

Over recent years the government has put an increasing emphasis on industrially funded rather than public sector-funded work on developments that are close to fruition. Peter Lilley, the trade and industry minister, indicated yesterday that the policy had been less successful than the

government had hoped among small to medium-sized firms.

"This country spends via government higher proportions of its gross domestic product than Japan [on research and development] but industry spends less," he said. Studies had shown that over a third of significant innovation had come from companies with up to 500 employees.

"It is clear that some firms, particularly the bigger firms, have an established tradition in R and D but it seems there is less evidence of this among smaller firms... so we are seeking to stimulate in areas of weakness," Mr Lilley said.

He hoped that the new scheme

would act as a catalyst and give smaller firms a taste for investing in science and technology research. Under the £32 million scheme, called Support for Products Under Research (Spur) companies with up to 500 employees will receive a third of their costs up to a maximum grant of £150,000 to develop advances in technology.

Mr Lilley said that he had also been holding "brainstorming" sessions with scientists, technologists, foreign businessmen, and overseas academics, on how "to make better use of our enormous scientific expertise, not just in higher education but at government research councils". He said

that two further schemes would be announced in the spring that would pay for experts from such centres as research councils, universities and polytechnics to help smaller firms experiencing technical difficulties in manufacturing and product development.

Trade and industry officials said that the department was spending between £300 and £370 million on science and technology under schemes such as Link, Smart and Launch-Aid. The figure is likely expected to rise next year by the rate of inflation or just above it.

The latest figures disclose that the department plans to spend £96.1 million during 1991-2 on

Britain's national and European space programmes, a rise of £7.3 million or 8.2 per cent. Funding on industrial innovation is expected to rise to £114.5 million, an increase of £4.9 million, or more than 4 per cent.

Department officials said that its spending ranged from areas such as food to aircraft electronics and included technical assistance, direct research funding for small and medium-sized companies, and collaborative research programmes between firms and universities. That fact was often ignored by critics of the government's science and technology spending levels, the officials said.

● A way of mass-producing and

testing 20,000 tiny lasers on a semiconductor chip has been developed by scientists. The technique, claimed to be reliable, faster and half the cost of conventional methods, could lead to cheaper gadgets including CD players, laser printers and electronic home information services. The development, called "full wafer technology", has been made by scientists at IBM's Zurich research laboratory in Switzerland using a standard chip-making process. Up to now, making commercial manufacturing of semiconductor lasers has been a time-consuming and costly task.

Science and technology, page 14

British justice not a casualty of war, judge tells detainees

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH justice had not become the first casualty of combat, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson of Lynton, yesterday assured Iraqi and Palestinian detainees facing deportation as security risks. They should have greater faith in representations to the much-criticised Home Office advisory panel, he said.

Lord Donaldson and two other judges were giving reasons for refusing an appeal by Abbas Cheblak, a noted Palestinian commentator and supporter of entente with Israel, for a writ of habeas corpus freeing him from custody and a judicial review.

Last week Lord Donaldson and Lords Justices Beldam and Nolan held that the home secretary's decision to deport Mr Cheblak could not be challenged in the courts. Matters of national security were involved and it was for the advisory panel, known as "the three wise men", to investigate the decision. Yesterday Lord Donaldson said that there was no doubt that Mr Cheblak's record, as put before the court, "makes the home secretary's decision surprising". But it was a record which, in some theoretical circumstances,

could look very different and "those who are able most effectively to undermine national security are those who least appear to constitute any risk to it".

Lord Donaldson said he was not implying that Mr Cheblak was other than "the innocent victim of circumstances" or that, on the other hand, the home secretary's decision was wrong. It was simply that there was no evidence that the decision was irrational. It would probably be a unique case if there was.

"If there is a lesson to be drawn from these proceedings it is that detainees should try to have greater faith in the desire of the special panel to safeguard their liberty to the maximum possible extent consistent with the risk to national security and should not first rush off to the courts, which are, at best, a second line of defence in special circumstances."

It was important that the public should be in no doubt that the existence of hostilities "has no effect whatsoever upon the administration of justice in this country. To assert, as has been asserted outside court in the context of this particular case, that 'British justice must now figure among the casualties of the Gulf war' is simply untrue," the judge said.

Whatever criticisms may be levelled at British justice, they could just as forcefully have been made before the outbreak of hostilities as after, because there has been no change whatsoever. To some extent, the need of national security "must displace civil liberties", albeit to the least possible extent. But it was not irrelevant to remember that "the maintenance of national security underpins and is the foundation of all our civil liberties".

The advisory panel was the appropriate forum for Mr Cheblak's appeal, Lord Donaldson said, and he had no doubt that it would be susceptible to judicial review if, for example, it could be shown to have acted outside its terms of reference.

Mr Cheblak, a researcher for the Arab League, who lives with his wife, Farhan, a son aged 10 and daughter aged six, in Kilburn, northwest London, is among 59 Iraqi and Palestinian men and women detained under threat of expulsion from Britain.

Mr Cheblak went before the Home Office panel, headed by Lord Justice Lloyd, last Friday. He has yet to hear from the Home Office on his future and may yet decide to go to the House of Lords. His solicitor is to discuss the implications of the ruling with him.

Law Report, page 32

High winds breaking up Gulf oil slicks

By PHILIP WEBSTER
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE three oil slicks in the Gulf are being dispersed more swiftly than expected, the war cabinet was told yesterday. High winds are breaking up the slicks and the flow of oil into the Gulf has slowed appreciably, ministers were told.

Information on the pollution is being collected by allied pilots as they fly over the region. "It is still a very serious problem but it is more manageable than it was," a senior source said. One despatcher plant has been closed and another is open but protected by booms and looking safe.

The war cabinet, which met for an hour under John Major's chairmanship, was told that the air bombardment of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard and its supply lines was to be stepped up. Whitehall sources emphasised that the government was in no hurry to launch a land war and denounced any reported difference of opinion between the United States and Britain over the timing of the assault.

Ministers were told that a further "noticeable" number of Iraqi combat aircraft had flown to Iran. Sources said they were the type of aircraft that might be used to support a ground attack. The number grounded in Iran is higher than the 110 mentioned on Tuesday night. The government continues to believe that the aircraft are being husbanded in Iran until the end of the war, and do not expect them to fly out before then.

The "softening up" of the Republican Guard would be intensified before the land battle gets under way. Whitehall sources emphasised that there must be patience and that there was no rush to go in before the air bombardment had had its effect.

Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, had talks yesterday with Tom King, the defence secretary, and will meet Mr Major and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, today. The prime minister will ask Mr Sommaruga for details of the Red Cross's abortive efforts to persuade the Iraqis to let them have access to allied prisoners of war.

Mr Major will visit Germany on Monday to hold talks with Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, and will then visit two British bases, where he will meet the wives of army and RAF personnel serving the Gulf.



Inside knowledge: Kuwaiti businessmen and students who volunteered to be guides and interpreters for the British Army in the Gulf on their way to a briefing yesterday before flying out to Saudi Arabia today. The 40 men gathered at the Kuwaiti embassy in London before being

taken to an army base for basic training and a briefing about their role. They expect to be working with British troops interviewing Iraqi prisoners of war and acting as guides once the allied forces move across the border into Kuwait. Ghassan al Khaleel, aged 40, who worked

in the import and export trade before Iraq invaded his country, said: "I am very proud to be able to help my country. We don't know what to expect when we get out there but we are prepared to do anything to free Kuwait." All the men said they had relatives still in Kuwait.

Funding plan for Thatcher cyclotron project dropped

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS have scrapped plans to give £6 million towards a controversial cancer treatment personally backed by Mrs Thatcher, it emerged yesterday.

The former prime minister had earmarked the money to help provide a £10.5 million cyclotron machine, which delivers neutron therapy for head and neck cancers, at St Thomas's hospital, London. Her decision, made after lobbying by Richard Packard, her eye surgeon, who is a member of the Cyclotron Trust, was opposed by the committee that co-ordinates cancer research in Britain.

The committee, led by Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, former president of the Royal College of Physicians, said that the money could be better spent on existing treatment than on unproven therapy, particularly as a cyclotron was already operating at Clatterbridge hospital in Wirral.

Cyclotrons deliver a high-energy beam of neutrons to treat eye tumours and head and neck cancers. Those opposed to the

treatment point to devastating side-effects that neutron therapy can have. Those have included irreversible tissue damage causing large ulcers, and perforations requiring extensive surgery.

Yesterday, the health department confirmed that it had pulled out of the scheme at St Thomas's.



Sir Raymond: his committee opposed cyclotron scheme

but denied that this was due to the change of prime minister. A spokesman said: "We have studied all the available medical evidence and we believe that neutrons and protons can provide appropriate treatment for a limited range of cancers, and the machine at the Clatterbridge has the capacity to deal with all UK present needs in respect of research and service. We have a system at Clatterbridge ready to go. It is sensible for that to be utilised instead of waiting four years for new facilities [at St Thomas's]."

Trials of the effectiveness of cyclotron treatment continue at Clatterbridge. However, last February, researchers stopped recruiting for a trial for patients with pelvic cancers, after deciding that neutron therapy showed no advantage over conventional radiation therapy for such patients.

Dr Doug Errington, consultant in radiotherapy at the Clatterbridge, said that there were no signs that the treatment was doing more harm than good.

Minister seeks end to rift with doctors

By JILL SHERMAN
SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

WILLIAM Waldegrave, the health secretary, last night called for further bridge building between the government and the medical profession and announced extra concessions on GPs' contracts. Speaking to the general medical services committee of the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners in London, Mr Waldegrave said he wanted to restore mutual confidence "after some necessary and legitimate arguments".

Distancing himself once again from the combative approach of his predecessor, Kenneth Clarke, he said: "I don't mind argument, lobbying, tension even, if that means we are engaged in real discussion about how to go forward. It is the silliness on both sides I want to get away from. We cannot behave like children who are sulking at each other."

Mr Waldegrave announced the setting up of a working group to look at ways of reducing the paperwork generated by the new contract. In addition, he said he had agreed to extend the eligibility for health promotion clinic payments to include sessions for fewer than ten patients, to help GPs in rural practices. He also announced that £1.5 million would be available for a number of small projects to develop medical audit in GPs' surgeries.

□ The health service could save £37 million by reorganising its hospital sterile services, the Audit Commission says in a report today. The commission also suggests that a substantial investment is needed to improve sterile departments, which provide equipment and dressings.

The report says that the cost of the £210 million service could be significantly reduced if more of the products were made or packaged commercially. Further savings of about £20 million nationally could be made by reducing the 25 per cent of stock found to be surplus. The money saved could be invested in upgrading 250 sterile departments, at an average cost of £100,000, the report says.

Value for Money in NHS Sterile Services (Stationery Office, £5)

Rabbi loses court fight against dismissal

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

A RABBI sacked for alleged sexual misconduct with two women from his Jewish community lost his attempt in the High Court yesterday to win his job back.

In the first case of its kind, Rabbi Ivan Wachmann challenged the Chief Rabbi's decision that he was morally and religiously unfit to remain in office. In a reserved judgment after a hearing on January 25, however, Mr Justice Simon Brown ruled that the court had no jurisdiction to intervene. He said that the court "would never be prepared to rule on questions of Jewish law".

Mr Wachmann, aged 55, of Prestwich, Manchester, said last night that there had been a smear campaign against him and added: "Because I know I am innocent, I will fight until my dying day for justice."

He denies any sexual misconduct and says that he was unfairly dismissed last August after complaints by two women who attended his evening lectures. He plans to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Law Report, page 32

Black PC wins £1,000 damages

A black London policeman was awarded £1,000 in damages yesterday because Scotland Yard discriminated against him when he complained about racial abuse from colleagues. Police Constable William Halliday was given the award in recognition of "injury to his feelings" by an industrial tribunal at Ashford, Kent.

Last year the tribunal dismissed PC Halliday's allegations that his inspector encouraged and condoned a campaign of abuse at Orpington police station, in southeast London. At the same time, the tribunal criticised the way in which the Metropolitan police dealt with complaints, and ruled that the force discriminated against the officer by transferring him when he complained.

The force is now changing its complaints system.

Bomb couple jailed

Roseanne McCordley, aged 34, and James Donnelly, aged 22, of Belfast, were each jailed for 22 years yesterday for planting a bomb beneath an RUC reservist's car. It is thought to be the longest specified sentence imposed on a woman for a terrorist offence in Northern Ireland. Hugh Rooney, also of Belfast, whose car was used in the murder attempt, was given a six-year sentence, suspended for four years. The hearing was at Belfast Crown Court.

Irish post jobs go

The Irish Post Office last night announced the loss of 1,500 jobs and up to 550 mostly rural sub-post offices. The measures are aimed at heading off expected record losses of almost £115 million. Most of the job losses, affecting more than 10 per cent of the Irish postal workforce, will be voluntary and come about because of the sub-post office closures. Communal mailboxes will be introduced, from which residents collect their own mail.

Grants restored

Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, agreed yesterday to restore grants to architecture students in the final years of their course. His decision came two days ahead of a High Court action by the Royal Institute of British Architects aimed at forcing him to do so. The grants were withdrawn by Mr Clarke's predecessor, John MacGregor, on the ground that they constituted a second degree.

Drink problem

Sheffield is among Britain's worst cities for drunkenness after a 13 per cent increase last year in such offences, according to a report by Richard Wells, chief constable of South Yorkshire. Many of the incidents related to illegal "blues parties" or "shebeens", where drugs and stolen goods were also sold. With 2,067 people charged with drunkenness offences last year, the city has the fifth worst alcohol problem in Britain, the report says.

Heart-lung surgery could be doubled

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE number of heart-lung transplants in Britain could be doubled, the surgeon who performed the hundredth such operation at Papworth hospital, Cambridge, said yesterday.

John Wallwork, consultant cardiothoracic surgeon at Papworth, said that about one in four patients died while awaiting the operation, but many of the difficulties surrounding donor organ shortages could be overcome. He led the team that gave a new heart and lungs to a man aged 32 in a four-hour operation on Tuesday.

The patient, Andrew Burton, of Little Wratting, Suffolk, was suffering from cystic fibrosis, an inherited and incurable disorder that causes chronic lung infections. Heart-lung transplants have been one of the biggest advances in treating the disease.

Thirty-two of the 100 Papworth patients who have undergone the heart-lung operation since it was first carried out there in 1984 have been teenagers or young adults with cystic fibrosis. As with most

such cases, Mr Burton's heart was healthy and was transplanted simultaneously into another patient in what is known as a "domino" operation. His condition was said to be stable yesterday.

For patients with incurable lung disease, it is often easier to graft both lungs and heart than lungs alone. Sixty-five of the 100 Papworth patients are still alive, including Brenda Barber, aged 42, of South London, who in 1984 was the first to have the operation. Fifty-two are alive five years after surgery.

Mr Wallwork said that the hospital had funding to carry out 120 heart-lung transplants this year but expected to do only about 80 because of a shortage of organs. "We could do twice the present number if there were better arrangements to identify suitable donors and retrieve organs from them," he said.

Health, page 15
Focus, page 28

Company offers drug free to cancer patient

By OUR MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A CANCER patient denied a new drug because of its cost was yesterday offered it free by the manufacturers.

Maureen Kendrick, who has kidney cancer, returned for tests yesterday to the Christie hospital, Manchester, where she had been receiving treatment.

Eurocetus UK, the company that distributes the drug in Britain, said that it was providing Mrs Kendrick with a free supply of the drug, on compassionate grounds. "We cannot afford to do this on a limitless basis, but Mrs Kendrick could benefit and we felt we ought to try to help," Dr John Kilborn, managing director of Eurocetus, said. The offer was made in response to a request to the company from Nick Thatcher, a consultant at the hospital who was treating Mrs Kendrick, aged 52, of Leek, in Staffordshire.

Earlier this week, Mr Thatcher complained that the hospital had refused to provide the funding necessary to allow Mrs Kendrick to be given the drug, which costs

about £2,500 a patient. The hospital's pharmaceutical budget is overspent by £300,000.

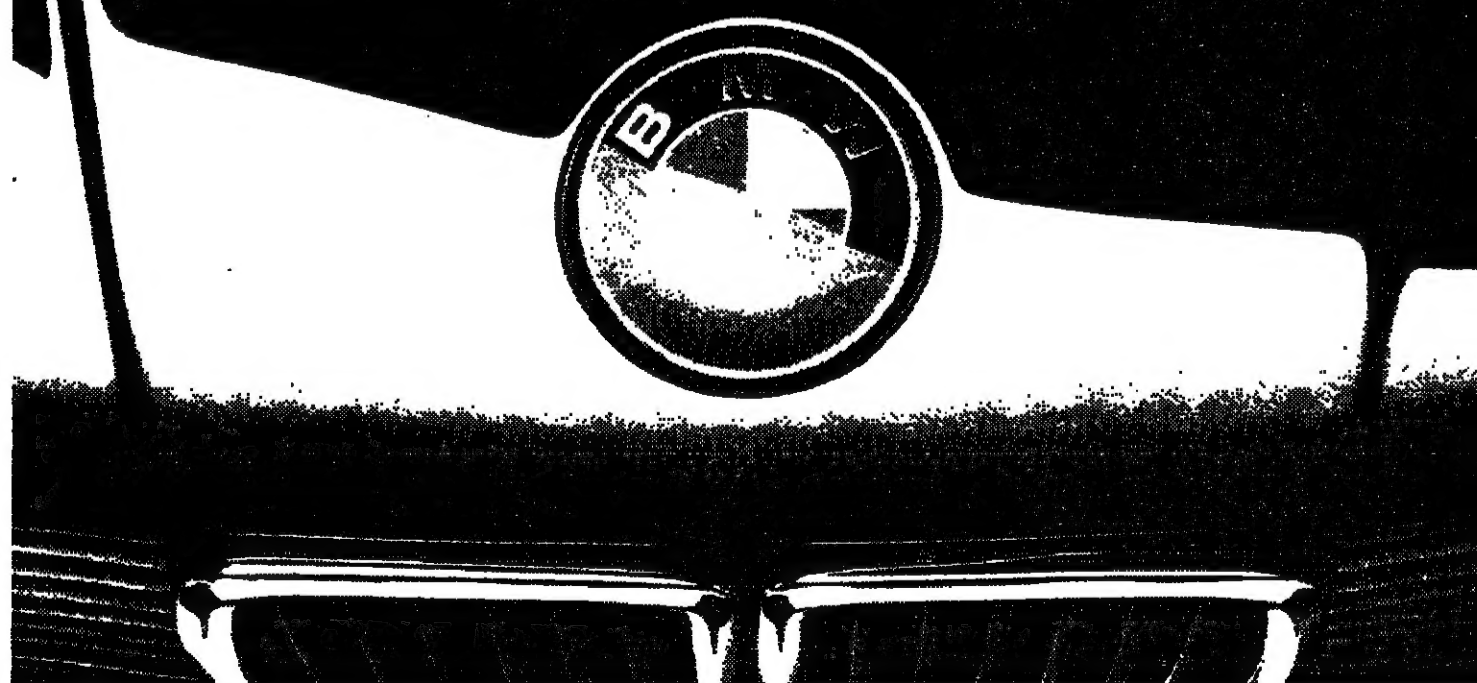
The drug has not been licensed for general use in Britain but was provided free to the Christie hospital by Eurocetus as part of clinical trials that ran for three years and ended last December.

William Waldegrave, the health secretary, has supported the hospital's decision not to fund the drug. He said on Tuesday that the drug, intertenkin-2, had been denied a product licence because of doubts about its safety and efficacy.

The drug, which was developed in America, has also been refused a licence by the United States authorities but has been approved for use in all European Community countries apart from the UK.

Mrs Kendrick is to undergo tests to determine whether the drug is suitable for her in her present condition. "I have been given my last chance and I am thrilled to bits," she said yesterday.

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THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE

Which? calls banks to account for cash machine mistakes

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE Consumers' Association criticises hole-in-the-wall cash dispensers today in a report that accuses the banks and building societies of being too ready to believe the machine ahead of the human when it comes to discrepancies in their service.

The association's magazine *Which?* singles out for special odium what it calls "phantom" withdrawals, when the account holder claims they did not make a withdrawal debited against their account. "Banks tend to say the customer is mistaken, because they assume that only the customer and the bank's computer know the card's personal identification number (PIN). Since the banks own, operate and profit from the dispensers, we think it should be up to them to prove that everything is working perfectly when the withdrawal took place. None of the card contracts we looked at states that the bank will do this," the magazine says.

A survey of 594 *Which?* readers who over a fortnight made more than 2,000 visits to dispensers showed that 35 per cent lost their card in the machine for no apparent reason, 6 per cent were given the wrong amount on at least one occasion, while 5 per cent received nothing even though their accounts were debited and

sometimes the machine issued a receipt. On the other hand, 1 per cent had received cash without their account being debited.

The operators say that the 14,000 machines nationally provide a foolproof service with 800 million transactions a year. Errors are caused not by computer malfunction but by customer or bank staff mistakes and mechanical failure. Most phantom withdrawals occurred within a few miles of the card-holder's home, which tends to indicate use by a third party connected with the holder. A computer fault would be more random in its selection of sites, the banks say.

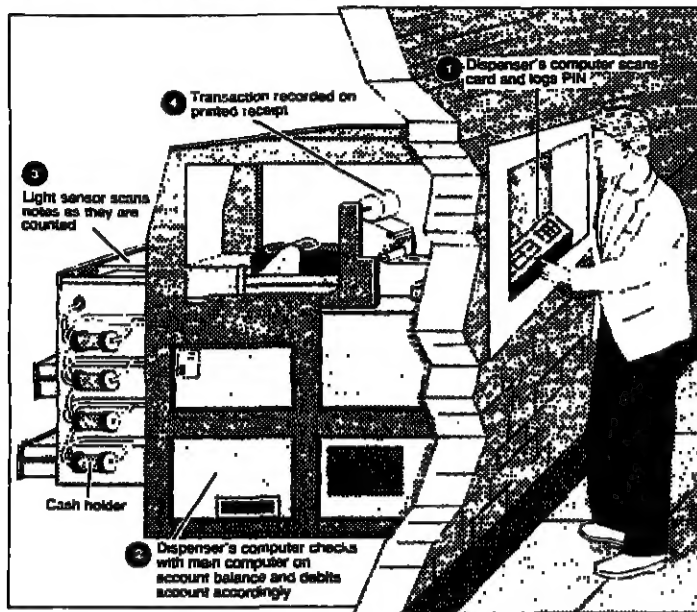
Complaints about Automated Teller Machines, as the banks call them, form the biggest single category investigated by the banking ombudsman. Last year his department dealt with 482 but in the great majority of them the bank's side of the argument was upheld. "In no case was the computer found to be at fault," the ombudsman's office said. "It was either a mechanical fault in the machine, which can invariably be traced through the records of the ATM, or a misunderstanding by the customer. Occasionally fraud by a third party was involved."

ATMs have come a long way from the first cash dispensers introduced more than 20 years ago. A mini-computer scans the card, reads account details off its magnetic strip and compares the PIN with that tapped in by the customer. The cash request is then checked by land line against the bank's main computer; if funds are available the machine is sanctioned to pay out.

Which? suggests there should be more sophisticated security to beat potential fraud; the banks agree and are looking at new techniques, including finger-printing, handwriting and retina scans. The Banking Information Service, however, says that as security becomes more complicated, margin for error and the costs increase.

Emergency evacuation of the newest cross-Channel ferry, Sealink Fantasia, would take almost three-quarters of an hour even in perfect conditions and without panic, *Which?* says. Standards set by the International Maritime Organisation call for complete evacuation by lift within 30 minutes but operators have no obligation to demonstrate they can meet the timescale.

Leading article, page 11



Factory to create 400 textile jobs

Four hundred textile industry jobs are to be created in Nottinghamshire with the building of a £50 million factory near Mansfield by the Japanese firm Toray, it was announced yesterday.

Toray, the world's sixth largest textile and clothing company, which already has a factory at Bulwell, Nottingham, said that it had chosen to expand in the county because of the positive attitude there.

Half a million square feet of factory space will be built on 47 acres at Newlands Road, Forest Town, with production starting early in 1993. The area will be the firm's main European base.

Compensation due

Carl Gannon, aged 22, of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, who was crippled during a swimming match when he dived into the shallow end from starting blocks and hit his head is entitled to compensation, the High Court ruled yesterday. The sum, to be paid by Nottinghamshire county council and the Amateur Swimming Association, has yet to be agreed.

Footballer banned

The Liverpool footballer Jimmy Carter was yesterday banned from driving for a year and fined £350 after being found to be nearly twice the drink-drive limit when stopped in south London on January 4.

Fire scare

Twenty-five babies in incubators, some on life-support machines, were evacuated from the special care baby unit at the Royal Cornwall hospital, Truro when fire broke out near the ward. No one was injured.

ICI fined £2,000

ICI was yesterday fined £2,000 for allowing the toxic chemical phenol to leak into the river Tees from its complex at Billingham, Cleveland, after workmen accidentally left open a valve.

Bear necessities

Traffic police at East Grinstead, West Sussex, have started carrying teddy bears to help to console children involved in accidents. If successful, the idea, copied from Sweden, will be extended.

Bath death

A girl aged two died yesterday after being found face down in the bath by her mother at their home in Alton, Hampshire. No names have yet been released.

Garbo treasure

A letter from Greta Garbo to the photographer Cecil Beaton, signed with a G, sold for £950 at auction in Nottingham yesterday. Dr Crippen's autograph fetched £110.

Wildlife thrives

A nature trail is being created on the site of the Sellafield nuclear plant in Cumbria after a survey found that it was an unexpected sanctuary for wildlife.

Top chef

Trefor Jones, aged 33, chef at the Celtic Manor hotel, Newport, Gwent, was yesterday named Welsh chef of the year.

Signs of recovery in housing market

By CHRISTOPHER WARMAN
PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

THE depressed housing market is showing signs of recovery, the Halifax building society said yesterday in its latest house price survey.

Although prices fell by 1.1 per cent in January, the largest monthly drop in the present downturn, the Halifax said that prices normally fell in January and that the seasonally adjusted figure showed a rise of 0.9 per cent.

The Halifax admitted that the market remained depressed but said that the underlying trend was positive. "If bank base rates fall to 12 per cent or below before the summer, house prices nationally could well be rising by up to 3 per cent by the end of the year." Overall, house prices were 0.1 per cent higher than a year ago.

The Halifax figures correspond closely with those published last week by Nationwide building society, which reported a 0.3 per cent increase in January after small falls in November and December, a trend that indicated "perhaps the first sign of a pick-up in the market".

A survey by GA Property Services yesterday showed that UK prices fell by an average of 8.7 per cent in the year to last autumn, but Bob North, the group's strategy and development director, took an optimistic view. "People are recognising the realism of a declining market. Holding out for unrealistic asking prices does nothing to encourage activity in the market."

He said that a cut in interest rates was needed to enhance confidence in the market and to halt the decline in prices, but there were already signs of growing activity as people recognised that now was a good time to buy.

The largest drop in prices between autumn 1989 and last year was in Greater London, where they fell by 13.8 per cent, followed by the South-West, with 13.4 per cent. The North-West, however, saw an increase of 4.5 per cent.

THE clearest evidence yet that the dinosaurs were extinguished by a cataclysmic event 65 million years ago has come from the study of tiny fragments of glass in Haiti.

The glass beads appear to be the result of the impact of a meteorite on the Earth, which threw a huge volume of vaporised material high into the atmosphere. Some of the material solidified into spherical drops of glass that fell to Earth again to be preserved in geological strata formed contemporaneously with the dinosaurs' sudden disappearance.

A team led by Haraldur Sigurdsson, of the University of

Ruling cheers defenders of historic Bath

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Court of Appeal yesterday quashed a decision by Nicholas Ridley, the former environment secretary, to permit a four-storey development on open land near Georgian terraces in Bath, and set a precedent that may affect future decisions relating to historic towns and villages.

The judges ruled that the minister's decision to permit 20 two-bedroom flats on the site occupied by Cavendish Lodge, Lansdown, was flawed because proper weight had not been given to a requirement of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act that special attention be paid to preserving or enhancing the character of conservation areas.

The court allowed an appeal by the Bath Society against a High Court ruling upholding the minister's decision. Michael Heseltine, the present environment secretary, was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords, and his department was ordered to pay costs for both court hearings.

Lord Justice Gidwell, sitting with Lord Justice Stocker and Sir Denys Buckley, said that the requirement to pay "special attention" to a conservation area's character should be the first consideration for those making planning decisions. Mr Ridley had allowed an appeal by Hammercrest Developments against Bath city council's refusal of consent for the flats.

In the High Court, last year, Mr Justice Hutchison upheld the min-

ister's argument that although there was no reference to enhancement in the letter giving the inspector's decision, the inspector had given the matter due consideration. Yesterday, Lord Justice Gidwell disagreed. "I cannot read into the inspector's report that he did approach the matter as I have suggested it should be approached," he said.

The Bath Society's appeal was presented by its vice-chairman, Major Anthony Crombie, assisted by its chairman, Lord Raglan. Major Crombie argued that the flats scheme would destroy the harmony between 18th and 19th-century architecture and surrounding landscape. After the judgment, he said: "This is an important victory for those interested in preserving the character of this country's historic towns."

Applying unsuccessfully for leave to appeal to the Lords, John

Howell, for the minister, said that the guidelines laid down by the court, which also applied to listed buildings, were "incapable of application". He claimed that the court was usurping the decision maker's role in deciding what importance to give the question of enhancement.

Giving judgment, Lord Justice Gidwell said that if a decision maker decided that a proposed development would neither preserve nor enhance the area, it was "almost inevitable" that the scheme would have some detrimental effect. In those circumstances, development should be allowed only if the decision maker concluded that it carried some overriding benefit. There was no suggestion in the inspector's report that the proposed development at the Cavendish Lodge site would enhance the conservation area. The inference to be



Major Anthony Crombie, left, vice-chairman of the Bath Society, and Lord Raglan, chairman, after their court victory

Glass beads clue to cataclysmic end to dinosaurs

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

Rhode Island, has found that the beads contain no gas, water or solid inclusions, which means that they must have been formed by an impact rather than volcanic action. Glass formed by volcanic eruptions always contains bubbles of gas.

Despite growing evidence that an impact killed the dinosaurs, some scientists continue to argue that their extinction might have been caused by violent volcanic activity. When the discovery of the glass beads was discussed at a recent scientific meeting, however, supporters of the volcanic theory could find no answer.

The dinosaurs, a group of reptiles ranging in size from a domestic hen to a double-decker

bus, flourished for 140 million years. They then disappeared abruptly from the fossil record, providing a source of endless speculation about what it was that caused such a sudden extinction.

In this week's issue of *Nature*, Sigurdsson and six colleagues say that the analysis of the glass beads suggests that the impact took place on a region of continental shelf, and that the glass was formed when rocks on the seabed were melted by the intense heat produced. The type of rock at two possible impact sites - the Manson Crater in Iowa, and the Chicxulub crater in Mexico - is consistent with the composition of the glass found at Beloc in Haiti. In an accompanying arti-

cle, Jan Smit, of the Free university in Amsterdam, argues that the Mexican crater, in northern Yucatan, is the most likely.

There are still many possible explanations of how the impact killed the dinosaurs. The original simple idea was that the rubbish thrown up by the impact darkened the skies and caused green plants to die, depriving the creatures of their food. Other possibilities include the igniting of huge global fires, or even the production of large amounts of nitrogen oxides, which would have formed acid rain.

Attempts to cut global warming by reducing the burning of fossil fuels could backfire, a specialist from the Climatic Re-

search Unit at East Anglia university said in *Nature*.

The initial effect of such changes might be to increase warming rather than to reduce it, and the warming effect might go on for as long as 30 years before the climate began to cool. That is because of the opposing effects of carbon and sulphur in coal and oil, according to Tom Wigley.

When burned, carbon forms carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that tends to make the climate warmer. Sulphur is converted into sulphur dioxide, then sulphate particles which form an aerosol encouraging the formation of clouds, which tend to keep the atmosphere cool, counteracting the effect of the carbon.



Winston chilled: snow covers the war leader's statue at Westerham, Kent, near Chartwell, as winds from Siberia came to the South

Freezing South gets taste of Siberia

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

IT'S official: the icy weather giving Britain its coldest snap for four years is coming directly from Siberia. For once, the explanation of the man-in-the-street for brass monkey weather has the support of professional meteorologists.

The forecasters expect the cold spell to last several days more, spreading gradually north and west and distributing the snow more widely. Temperatures will stay low, perhaps falling to minus 10C (14F) at night and hovering around freezing point during the day. The pattern of weather is similar to that which produced Britain's last serious spell of cold weather in 1987, when heavy snow falls and drifting cut off villages in southeast England for several days.

The flow of air is dominated by a high-pressure region centred over Scandinavia, which is pulling air across the whole of Europe from Siberia. There, temperatures at this time of year fall to minus 30C (-22F). With nothing to warm the air, it arrives in western Europe almost as cold as it left Siberia.

carrying the cold air across the North Sea, where it does warm up slightly. Oceans are a far greater source of heat than land masses; in this case, the North Sea also adds to the airflow the water vapour that then falls as snow over Britain.

So long as a high-pressure area remains over Scandinavia and a low centres on the Alps, no change can be expected. Forecasters at the Meteorological Office could

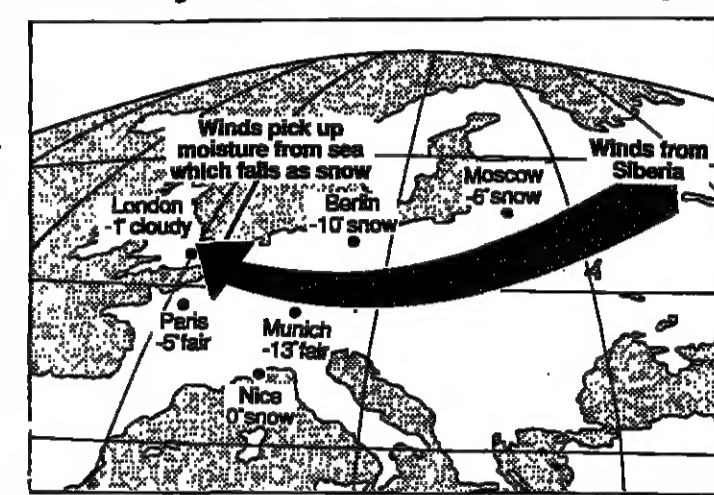
yesterday see no break in the pattern, and expect fresh or strong easterly winds to continue, with heavier snow showers over eastern and southern England.

The indications are that, at the weekend, the winds will move north towards Scotland. The heaviest falls are still expected to be in the East and the South, and fresh or strong east winds may bring drifting.

In the middle of January 1987

the temperature in southern England did not rise above freezing for ten days, and on one day the temperature in London did not exceed minus 6.7C (20F).

The four coldest winters this century have been 1963, 1947, 1940 and 1979. Of those, 1963 was the coldest in most places, but 1947 was the snowiest, with fallen snow lingering well into March. The two most recent winters were among the warmest on record.



Winds gusting at 30mph are

Hazardous goods to be banned from tunnel

By MICHAEL DYNES
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

EUROTUNNEL is planning to prohibit the carriage of virtually all toxic and hazardous goods when the Channel tunnel opens in 1993. Concern over passenger safety, reinforced by the need to prevent accidents and to keep the tunnel operating and earning revenue, has forced Eurotunnel to ban most dangerous goods, including petroleum, hazardous chemicals, gases under pressure, nuclear waste and most combustible and corrosive materials.

The exceptions will be certain categories of mildly dangerous goods, such as fertilizers, permanganate of soda and aerosol dispensers, which Eurotunnel will accept only if correctly packaged. Experiments to establish what kinds of packaging will be required are still in progress.

The Inter-Governmental Commission, the Anglo-French body set up to monitor Channel tunnel safety, has endorsed Eurotunnel's "restrictive approach", the company said.

Alain Bertrand, the Eurotunnel official responsible for developing the policy on dangerous goods, said that its adoption followed examination of regulations governing the carriage of dangerous goods through Alpine tunnels. Although the mountain tunnels had an excellent safety record, Eurotunnel had not felt that their procedures were adequate for the Channel tunnel. M Bertrand said. The spillage of an apparently harmless substance, such as salt, for example, could react with the damp atmosphere, cause corrosion, and disrupt operations. "That is why we need more stringent safety procedures," he added.

The Freight Transport Association, which represents the interests of British road and rail hauliers, has expressed concerns that Eurotunnel's restrictions are excessive, and could impair the ability of British industry to compete in continental markets.

M Bertrand conceded that the restrictions "may make it totally uneconomic for companies to ship certain types of permissible dangerous goods". He insisted, however, that "commercial pressures cannot be allowed to undermine the operational safety of the tunnel".

Consignments of rail and road freight will be subject to rigorous inspections at the tunnel terminals at Folkestone and Calais, and all permissible dangerous goods will have to be clearly labelled and declared in advance of transit.

M Bertrand accepted that it would be impossible to prevent all violations of the dangerous goods policy, particularly as far as heavy goods vehicles were concerned. "A parcels van carrying hundreds of packages may well contain something on the prohibited list. But nothing else will get through," he said.

Major victory transformed Tory image, poll shows

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

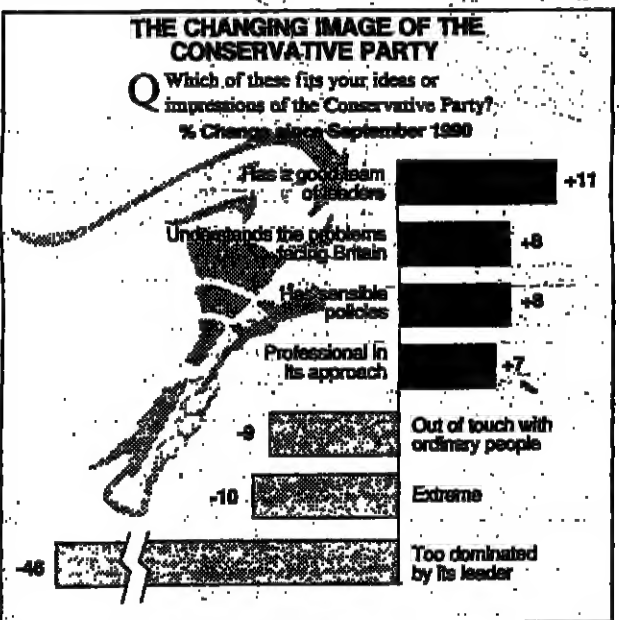
JOHN Major's election to replace Margaret Thatcher as Conservative leader has transformed the party's image. The latest Mori poll for Times Newspapers shows a sharp difference in the number of people who believe that the Tories are too dominated by their leader.

In September, 37 per cent of those questioned believed that the party was too dominated by its leader. In January, that figure was down to 11 per cent, a change of 46 per cent and one percentage point less than the 12 per cent who apply that description to Labour.

Mr Major's arrival, which has seen the biggest surge in popularity for a party leader since Churchill succeeded Chamberlain, has had some other beneficial effects for the Tories, as the accompanying chart shows. Compared with the September findings, 11 per cent more believe that the party has a good team of leaders, 8 per cent more believe that the Conservatives understand the problems facing Britain and 8 per cent more believe that it has sensible policies. Seven per cent more say that the Tories are professional in their approach.

Further, 10 per cent fewer believe that the Tory party is extreme, halving the proportion who hold that opinion, and 9 per cent fewer believe that it is out of touch with ordinary people. But more than twice as many still see Labour as "looking after the interests of people like us" than those who apply that label to the Conservatives (25 per cent to 11 per cent) and nearly four times as many regard the Conservatives as "out of touch with ordinary people" (46 per cent, to 12 per cent for Labour).

Mr Mori interviewed a representative quota sample of 1,954 adults aged 18 and over at 149 constituency sampling points throughout Great Britain, from 18 to 21. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population. ©Mori/Times Newspapers.



Hogg and Patten for the manifesto

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CHRIS Patten, the Conservative chairman, and Sarah Hogg, head of the Downing Street policy unit, are expected to be asked by John Major to write the party's election manifesto.

That was disclosed yesterday as colleagues of Mr Patten vigorously denied any suggestion of tension between the policy arms of Downing Street and Conservative Central Office.

Mr Patten, who wrote the European elections manifesto for Margaret Thatcher in 1989, wrote recently of a genuine independent think tank out of the Conservative research department and the Centre for Policy Studies.

That led to Westminster gossip that Mr Patten was set on building up a policy machine at Smith Square that would clash with the Downing Street unit.

However, it has emerged that Mr Patten regards any move to make big changes to the research department as a long-term matter, to be implemented after a general election. His immediate priorities are strengthening the party's organisation and communications in readiness for the general election.

The Conservative machine is being geared up in case Mr Major decides to go for an election in June. Among Tory strategists the most favoured time for the election appears to be next year, although they accept that the case for June this year could strengthen.

The internal manifesto groups are to deliver their reports to Mr Patten soon. The main themes of the Tory appeal at the election are expected to be sound money, social responsibility, the creation of an "opportunity Britain" and improvements in the public services.

The defeat of inflation is the Thatcherite objective most enthusiastically adopted by Mr Major's government and will be a central plank of the manifesto. One senior minister involved in manifesto planning said: "We all know that it began to fall apart for us, and particularly for Margaret Thatcher, when it appeared that we had lost control of inflation. That lesson has been learnt."

Mr Patten and Mr Major have set out their visions for vastly improved public services. The party chairman said in a speech this week: "I think that a proper target for 2010 or before is to raise standards in the public sector so high that no one will seriously believe that the private sector should be an automatic choice for those who have the resources to opt for it."



Blair: During a recession investment in skills is needed

Government told to make better use of training

By JOHN WINDER AND PETER MULLIGAN

BETTER training should be used to help to tackle unemployment, Sir Norman Fowler, the former Conservative employment secretary, said in the Commons last night. He also urged consistency in government training policy.

The government should seek the advice of the training and enterprise councils (TECs) and task forces it had created about how to get contributions to training from employers who did not make one.

Speaking during an Opposition-led debate, he said that the basic structure of training should remain the same. It was important to have national standards and vital to have local delivery.

Having created the TECs and attracted some outstanding managers, the government should devote to them. There must be no lingering bureaucracy or parts of the employment department getting in the way of the TECs.

"Unemployment is increasing and better training is one way to tackle that. I do not address those words to the employment secretary (Michael Howard) but the shadowy unseemly guest at all our debates, the chief secretary to the Treasury (David Mellor)."

Tony Blair, shadow employment secretary, opening the debate, said that government cuts of £300 million in its training budgets were savage. Training and retraining was even more important at a time of recession in a year when 25,000 companies were expected to go to the wall.

He said that when the employment training scheme was introduced, Sir Norman Fowler had told MPs that training was what the long-term unemployed required.

"What has changed? Did the minister decide training was no longer necessary and then make a cut? Or did he agree to a cut and then cast around for an excuse?"

Mr Blair added: "It is precisely at a time of recession that investment in skills must be maintained and increased." Why should industry be expected to heed the government's urging to keep up training, when the government set such an example?

He warned the government about the continental emphasis on training.

Defending the decision to cut the budget, Michael Howard, employment secretary, accused Labour of using the unemployed for political purposes; the government believed that they should be treated as individuals.

"It has become clear," he added, "that for many unemployed people a lack of skill is not the prime obstacle to finding a job. For many the main difficulty is a lack of morale or lack of motivation."



Cold aid debate refused

An attempt to force a Commons debate on the need for cold weather payments to be made to elderly people with limited means during the present cold spell failed when the Speaker told David Winnick, Labour MP for Walsall North, that the matter did not meet the requirements governing emergency debates.

Mr Winnick said that many people did not have nearly enough to keep their homes adequately heated and, even when the conditions triggering the special payments had been met, the payment was only £5 a week.

Rosyth base

Allan Stewart, a junior Scottish office minister, sought to reassure MPs that no decision had been taken to close the Royal Navy base at Rosyth in Fife. He said at questions that the government recognised the implications any such closure would have for the area's economy.

New pps

Gwilym Jones (Cardiff N, C) is to be parliamentary private secretary to Roger Freeman, public transport minister.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Home Office; prime minister; Disability Living Allowance and Disability Working Allowance bill, remaining stages; Lords (3): Statutory Sick Pay bill, Commons amendments.

Owen wants local NHS

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PROPOSALS aimed at ending what he called the grotesque over-centralisation of the National Health Service were put forward by Dr David Owen last night.

The former leader of the SDP said that that could be achieved at a stroke by converting district health authorities into health service trusts and so ensuring a clear distinction between purchasers and providers of health services.

Dr Owen told a meeting in Leeds that national decision-making tolerated waiting lists

and a queuing mentality. It was too often remote from consumer needs.

Trust status for district health authorities, which was compatible with present legislation but had been ruled out by Kenneth Clarke, the former health secretary, would bring other benefits in addition to a service better geared to consumer needs.

"Conditions of work and pay would be freed from national controls and slowly a fully decentralised pay-bargaining procedure might develop. If all district health

authorities were to become trusts, one of the most unattractive features of the health service, namely its grotesque over-centralisation, would be ended at a stroke."

Dr Owen also criticised ministers for refusing to extend patients' rights because they were fearful of the implications for costs. People facing a lengthy wait for treatment at their local hospital should have an absolute right to be referred elsewhere by their GP.

Letters, page 11

Unionists meet Brooke as hopes fade on Ulster talks

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE two Unionist leaders meet Peter Brooke today with hopes fading that he will be able to find a formula to allow the start of talks on the future administration of Northern Ireland.

Unionist politicians believe that his twelve-month quest to develop a formula that would allow negotiations on an alternative to the Anglo-Irish agreement is running into the sands and that he is in danger of losing credibility.

Mr Brooke has given the

clearest indication that he is preparing to announce the failure of his attempt to start a process that would include talks on devolved government in the province, discussions on a North-South relationship and also on links between London and Dublin.

He said that the time may be approaching to "put up the shutters" on his present initiative, with several difficulties unresolved and no important progress being made towards bridging the gaps that exist

between the various parties involved.

Yesterday, Charles Haughey, the Irish Republic's prime minister, denied that his government was blocking progress towards political dialogue in the North. He said: "We cannot contemplate failure because the result would be catastrophic."

The key obstacles that remain to be overcome are the timing of the Irish Republic's involvement in the process and the insistence by the Unionist parties that they should attend talks with the Dublin government as part of the UK delegation.

The Unionist leaders, James Molyneux and the Rev Ian Paisley, want the talks between the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland to make substantial progress on an internal administration before the start of the second round on North-South relations which would involve the Dublin government. However, the government of the republic and the Social Democratic and Labour party want a timetable set because of fears that Unionists will use delaying tactics in the first set of talks in order to postpone the second stage that is intended to involve Dublin.

A proposal that Mr Brooke should decide when enough progress had been made in the internal talks to allow the start of North-South discussions is viewed with suspicion in Dublin. The republic's government wants broad agreement that this should happen after a few weeks and it fears that the Northern Ireland secretary could come under pressure from the Unionists to delay the start of the second stage of negotiations.

Ministers to keep atom firm share

By OUR CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE government has surprised Labour MPs by disclosing that it intends to retain an important control over the company being set up to employ staff when the management of Aldermaston and other nuclear weapons manufacturing sites is taken over by the private sector.

In a move hailed as a victory by the Opposition, it has also tabled amendments to the Atomic Weapons Establishment bill designed to tighten environmental safeguards at the four sites. The government has reversed its plans to grant the new company immunity from various pieces of environmental legislation.

During committee proceedings on the Bill, the Labour party has been pressing the government to keep a continuing majority interest in the operations of Aldermaston and the three other atomic

weapons establishments. It had argued that the government needed control to prevent commercial and profit interests from overriding the company's concern for safety and security. Concerns were also voiced about its falling into foreign or undesirable hands.

Under the government's plans, a company will be formed solely to employ atomic weapons establishment staff who will be transferred from the civil service. The contracting company being brought in to take over the running of the establishments will own the employing firm.

However, Kenneth Carlisle, a defence procurement minister, has told the committee that the government will keep a special share in the employing company to ensure that its control cannot be changed without consent.

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KGB's openness stops short of answering awkward questions

THE Soviet Union is becoming a surreal place: professors of musicology become presidents of republics, and KGB officers resemble professors of musicology — or at least do their best to do so.

Lieutenant-Colonel Algirdas Rukšenas of the Lithuanian KGB is a striking example, reminding one in the interview room at KGB headquarters in Vilnius of a Cambridge professor — except that his suit is rather better cut. But he was not my concern. I was at the headquarters to interview the lieutenant-colonel's superior, Colonel Edmundas Baltinas, a deputy director of the Lithuanian KGB. I hoped to persuade him to amplify his statement of two weeks ago in which he bitterly criticised the Soviet military attack on and occupation of the Lithuanian television station on January 13 in which 14

Lithuanians were killed. This proved rather difficult. Colonel Baltinas has a way of blushing and squirming in his seat when asked awkward questions. It is his way of avoiding them.

According to the colonel, "I and all the other officers of the Lithuanian KGB view the events of the 13th very negatively. The use of force to solve political questions is bad in itself and is also pointless. The occupation of these buildings is also illogical — sooner or later they will have to be returned to their proper owners."

Asked what was likely to happen next, Colonel Baltinas declined to make predictions "because these decisions are being taken at a different level from the KGB". He added, however, that "I think the forces responsible for the attack on the TV station have learned such a

Senior officers in the KGB are increasingly willing to make public statements critical of the Moscow regime. Anatol Lieven in Vilnius finds the reason to be a complex amalgam of politics and self-interest

lesson from what happened that they probably won't try such a move again". He said the reason for their failure had been the unexpected Western reaction, lack of support from Moscow and, most importantly, the rallying of the Lithuanian people behind the government of Vytautas Landsbergis. "There used to be much Lithuanian criticism of Landsbergis, but since these events this has died down," he said. He said the local KGB had had nothing to do with the attack on the television station. "We

warned them (the Soviet military) against the use of violence, but they didn't listen to us."

Echoing what could be a moderate Soviet line, Colonel Baltinas said that independence was desirable but that its achievement should be a phased process.

He is not the first senior KGB officer to make known his criticism of military actions. Last month, for instance, a KGB chief in Georgia, Major General Otar Khatiasvili, launched a blistering press attack on those responsible for the

massacre of demonstrators in Tbilisi on April 9, 1989. The most likely explanation of such statements is that KGB officers, being both natives of their own republics and highly intelligent, are securing their future ability to go on living at home, rather than being chased out to Moscow. They may even be able to secure future careers in independent republics.

The governments of Lithuania and Georgia have both made clear that they view the setting up of their own security services as a priority, and for this they will need professional officers.

The Soviet KGB may increasingly be forced to tolerate a measure of openness from below for fear that its whole delicate apparatus in several republics may otherwise collapse. The resignation of 20 KGB officers, if true, would

certainly be a sign of this. Intelligence work requires intelligent native speakers, not brutish Russian soldiers or the handful of has-beens making up the remnants of the Soviet Communist party in Lithuania.

Alternatively, such statements could be expressions of the power struggle going on between the different branches of the Soviet government. They could also reflect the traditional contempt of military officers for the flat-footed intelligence services for the flat-footed military approach to repression.

Perhaps most likely is the possibility that Colonel Baltinas's statements reflect a mixture of all these factors. But what the exact mixture is, and where the colonel will be found in the event of full-scale military repression in Lithuania is a question which, despite his apparent openness, he is still not answering.

Baker pleads with Moscow to resume the path of reform

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

JAMES Baker, the American Secretary of State, appealed to Moscow yesterday to resume the path of reform "for the sake of history and for the sake of the world".

Appearing before the House foreign affairs committee, Mr Baker delivered one of the gloomiest assessments of Soviet affairs in years, pointing to the return to economic centralisation, suppression of freedom in the media, resurgence of the Soviet army and KGB, departure of key reformists such as Eduard Shevardnadze from President Gorbachev's inner circle and, above all, Moscow's "tragic" repression in the Baltic republics.

"The old ways are not the right ways. Perestroika cannot succeed at gunpoint," he declared. Such unyielding actions were "completely inconsistent with the course of peaceful change, democratic principles, the rule of law and real economic reform".

Referring specifically to the Baltic area, he said there was "simply no justification" for using force against peaceful, democratically elected governments and that "our hearts go out to the courageous people of the Baltic states".

He disclosed that the administration had stepped up links with Baltic leaders and was completing plans for

sending a "large part" of the humanitarian aid, which the US has promised Moscow, direct to those three republics.

Confirming that Moscow was seeking, in American eyes, to violate the treaty to cut conventional forces in Europe, Mr Baker said he did not believe the agreement should be sent to the Senate for ratification under the present circumstances, and said that the nearly completed treaty to reduce superpower strategic nuclear arsenals was also jeopardised.

Mr Baker recognised President Gorbachev's argument that restoration of discipline was necessary if his reform programme was ultimately to succeed, but also saw a danger of intensified repression.

● MOSCOW: The Soviet Union's top constitutional review body, the Constitutional Compliance Committee, was reported yesterday to have begun consideration of the orders which authorised joint army and police patrols on city streets (Mary Dejevsky writes). The move was challenged by the Russian Federation parliament, which argued that the army could fulfil law-and-order functions only after the formal declaration of a state of emergency.

While consideration of the patrols may be a mere formality, Sergei Alekseyev, the chairman of the committee, has a reputation for fearless integrity. He overturned a decree by President Gorbachev last autumn which gave the central leadership the right to prevent demonstrations inside the Moscow ring road.

He also expressed public reservations about the legitimacy of Soviet army intervention in Lithuania last month when troops of the Vilnius garrison were supposedly called out by the intervention of a self-appointed committee of national salvation.



In the public eye: A man walking out of a lavatory in Tokyo's Taito district, which is promoting a series of new clean and eye-catching public conveniences

Millionaire may be tried over Gorbachev insult

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

THE Soviet Union's chief law officer announced yesterday that he was seeking leave to prosecute a certain Artem Tarasov for "insulting the honour and dignity of the Soviet president". If the case comes to court, Moscow will witness one of the most glittering trials for years, for Mr Tarasov is not only an elected deputy of the Russian Federation parliament, he is also the country's only known rouble millionaire — and proud of both achievements.

In physique and determination Mr Tarasov resembles President Gorbachev and, like the Soviet leader, his luck has begun to run out. Making money with impunity in a nominally socialist state has its liabilities and Mr Tarasov is feeling the political draught.

The net began to close around him ten days ago, when the premises of two subsidiaries of his parent company Istok were raided by police and KGB officers. At first, the investigations were linked with Mr Gorbachev's recent decree on "stepping up

the fight against economic sabotage", which permitted raids on suspect enterprises.

Mr Tarasov objected to the Russian parliament to the treatment of his employees who, he said, had been taken from their flats at gunpoint and forced to take police and the KGB to their offices. It subsequently emerged, however, that the raids were linked, at least officially, with investigations into an extortion racket in Lithuania.

People were said to have been taken hostage and released only in return for large sums of money. The trail was alleged to lead to Arisa, an airport services company based at Moscow's international airport, Sheremetyevo, and from there to Istok. The airport is recognised to be a den of iniquity. So far, the charges of economic and criminal malpractice against Mr Tarasov himself have been no more than insinuations.

Shortly before the first raids on Arisa became public, however, Mr Tarasov was responsible for what with hindsight

will be judged either as a deliberate leak of information or a gross political blunder. He suggested in an interview that Mr Gorbachev might be ready to sell the four disputed islands in the Kurile chain to Japan, for \$105 billion. This was widely interpreted as suggesting that a secret deal had already been negotiated.

A flurry of outraged foreign ministry and presidential denials followed and Vitali Ignatenko, one of the president's chief aides, flew to Japan. Mr Gorbachev let it be known that he was considering suing Mr Tarasov. The businessman said he would apologise, but the chief prosecutor said yesterday that the state will initiate prosecution.

The Tarasov case is infinitely tangled and leaves several questions unanswered. Was his claim of a deal on the Kuriles the cause or a symptom of his troubles? Is he a victim of the cooler political climate, or was his empire always of dubious reality? Are his difficulties real, or merely a warning to others?

Bonn to speed investment in the ailing east

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

JUST four months after East and West Germany merged, the cabinet yesterday agreed on changes in the unification treaty to encourage more investment and quicker privatisation in the eastern part of the country. At the same time Kurt Biedenkopf, the Christian Democrat prime minister of Saxony, said that the five east German federal states would ask the courts for further changes in the treaty, if the government did not significantly increase financial aid to them.

Government estimates last year that private investment would pour into the east immediately after unification have proved wrong. January's unemployment figures, published yesterday, underlined the point, showing that another 115,000 jobs disappeared in eastern Germany last month, and that, with 757,200 now out of work, unemployment had risen to 8.6 per cent. With a further 1,855,524 now on short-time working in the east, scarcely three-quarters of the workforce has full-time jobs, while unemployment is continuing to rise at an average rate of 11,000 a day.

Herr Biedenkopf, speaking in Dresden yesterday, said that without more generous government aid all five east German states would soon be bankrupt. He said they were seeking extra subsidies and tax concessions worth DM35 billion (£12 billion), adding that the states might take the matter before the constitutional court.

Under the terms of the German basic law, which now covers the united country, all areas must have roughly the same living standards. The five states mean to point to the huge disparity between conditions in the two parts of the country to persuade the court to order the government to increase its level of aid. Herr Biedenkopf suggests this could be financed by increasing value added tax from 14 to 16 per cent.

Helmut Kohl, the chancellor, who so far has ruled out any tax increases to finance the unification process, is still pinning his hopes on encouraging new investment. This was why his cabinet decided yesterday to amend the unification treaty to diminish risk involved in buying businesses in the east.

Until now investors have been reluctant to buy East German companies because the unification treaty promised to return all property confiscated by the communist government or to pay compensation for it. Those who used to own property were asked to lodge claims and more than a million have done so, necessitating a lengthy legal delay while the courts decide who owns what. Hard-nosed businessmen,

meanwhile, have not been ready to gamble on a concern which might later be reclaimed.

The proposed treaty changes will force claimants either to allow a speculator to take over a business or start it up themselves. Compensation, where due, would be paid after the courts decide on ownership and there would be no need to wait for the lengthy legal process to grind its way through the courts.

● Farmers hit: The average income of German farmers will drop by 20 per cent in the current year, Ignaz Kiechle, the agriculture minister, reported to the cabinet yesterday.

Voice of Mickey Mouse is dead

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

JAMES MacDonald, the Scottish-born sound-effects man who for 30 years was the voice of Mickey Mouse and many other Disney characters, has died in California aged 84.

"Jimmy was probably one of the best sound-effects men in Hollywood in the early days, a real pioneer," a Walt Disney spokesman said yesterday. "He created all the effects you hear in Disney animated shorts. He was an absolute genius."

Mr MacDonald came to the United States from Dundee as an infant and trained as an engineer. He began playing percussion for a dance band on a passenger line. In 1934, between voyages, he played with a band that was used to record the background for an early Mickey Mouse cartoon. Disney, who had provided his own voice for the falsetto mouse, recruited him to his newly formed Sound Effects Department, doing vocal effects and cartoon voices.

In *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs he created gurgling waterfalls, falling rain, the catpaw and yodel for the dwarfs and moaned for Sneezy. He was the timpanist in the soundtrack from *Fantasia*. He took over from Disney as Mickey's voice in *Fun and Fancy Free* in 1946 and was the voice of Disney's signature characters until his retirement in 1976. After that he returned to do occasional effects, including the voice of Evinrude, the outboard motor in the recent *Rescuers* cartoon. MacDonald credited his engineering background with helping him make virtually all the sound effects equipment at Disney.

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A small number of bottles of Country Satin Cream Liqueur have been found to contain fragments of glass.

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Lambada blows away marxist cobwebs in Laos

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN VIENTIANE

BEFORE the stolid faces of the Laos communist hierarchy and foreign envoys, a scantily clad Laotian girl danced an uninhibited version of the lambada as a rock band blared. The occasion was a recent state reception marking the 15th anniversary of a revolution in Laos, after similar communist victories in neighbouring Vietnam and Cambodia.

In a land where, just a year or two ago, a girl wearing jeans or a teenage boy with long hair could find themselves in a re-education camp, or at least be given a stern lecture by the police, the scene was surprising. Vientiane's foreign diplomatic community were suitably taken aback. "We

have seen girls dancing at these events before," said one envoy. "But in the past they were dressed as Pathet Lao soldiers, shouting slogans and waving rifles."

Yet Kaysone Phomvihane, the prime minister and Pathet Lao communist party leader, did not bat an eyelid. At a parade the next day, as floats featuring locally-made Pepsi and beer passed party officials on a rostrum, Mr Kaysone, aged 70, called for more market reform and urged businessmen to expand free enterprise into rural areas.

Most things move as slowly in Laos as the sluggish Mekong river that undulates through the landlocked mountainous country of 4.1 million people. Somehow dancing the lambada at a state reception was symbolic of the dramatic changes in the past two years.

Although communism in Laos could not be compared to Pol Pot's rule in Cambodia, its early years, from 1975 to 1979, were harsh and Stalinist. It was a time of re-education camps for up to 40,000 officials and officers of the old royal regime, farm collectivisation and nationalisation of private business. Every facet of life was controlled. But now, as the government opens to Western investment, most of the prisoners of re-education camps have been freed after a dozen or more years of hard labour and are re-entering society.

Most Laotians can now get a passport and leave, but the trend is the other way. The government is asking many of the 343,000 refugees who fled abroad in the

early days of what are now admitted "mistaken policies" to return home, allowing them to reclaim former homes and land. Day passes are available to cross the Mekong to buy popular casual clothing, including once banned jeans and electronic goods, in Thailand.

But it is not all sweetness and light. Diplomats say there are still up to 300 political detainees, including 33 held since 1975. Recently three former officials were arrested for calling for multi-party democracy and charged with anti-government activities. One denounced the regime as a "communist monarchy" and a "dynasty of the politburo". The government has said he will be tried under a new legal code.

The arrests point to the limitations of "new thinking". The openness is on the economic side only: there are no plans for political relaxation. This is still an authoritarian one-party state, though a new constitution should be ready before a key party congress due by mid-year.



Kaysone calling for more market reforms

South African right presses for Afrikaner homeland

FROM GAVIN BELL IN CAPE TOWN

SOUTH Africa's right-wing Conservative party, enraged by the destruction of apartheid, has stepped up its calls for an independent Afrikaner homeland.

The Conservatives' implacable resistance to the reform process was summed up yesterday by Pieter Mulder, one of the party's leading figures, who cited the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh as a historical precedent for the partition of his own country. "Why should we be treated any differently?" he said. "As Afrikaners we claim self-

determination for our people."

Briefing journalists, Dr Mulder added that he could not see that Afrikaners had anything to gain from taking part in negotiations on a new constitution which they believed would result ultimately in a black dictatorship.

Dr Mulder, a professor of communication, drew extensively on history and academic theories to justify the Conservatives' argument that power-sharing in an ethnically diverse state is a recipe for disaster. He pointed to Lebanon and Cyprus and to the experience of black Africa, which has had more than 150 heads of state since 1957, only six of whom voluntarily relinquished power.

In a whirlwind review of the world's trouble spots, he said: "Try telling the Basques, the Corsicans, the Kurds, the Palestinians and the Tamils of Sri Lanka that autonomous regions and micro-states will not work. You can add to that the Afrikaners of South Africa." Power-sharing was losing power by instalments, partition was the only realistic solution in South Africa.

Referring to post-colonial "honeymoon constitutions" elsewhere in Africa, Dr Mulder said: "Safeguards for minorities which aim at frustrating black power have not worked in the past, nor can they work in the future. It is an illusion to believe that a way can be found to rule a deeply divided society in such a way that one group will not be dominated by others. When these realities finally become clear to all South Africans, we might find ourselves in a Lebanon-type situation."

Toeing his party's line against violence, Dr Mulder evaded questions about armed resistance by paramilitary groups. But, he said, "we invented guerrilla warfare against the British, and we are good at it. Also, most South African whites have received a high level of military training. These are not threats, they are facts."

In the meantime, conservative politicians are pinning their hopes on popular rejection of a post-apartheid constitution in the referendum promised by the government. With fewer than a third of white votes in the last general election in September 1989, however, their prospects of blocking the new order at the polls must be considered remote.

As a son of the late Connie Mulder, whose career as a leading National Party politician was wrecked by a corruption scandal in 1978, Dr Mulder is well schooled in the cut and thrust of politics. But the forces ranged against him appear overwhelming.

The fate of diehard Afrikaners raging against the winds of change is perhaps best summed up by Dr Zach de Beer, the leader of the liberal Democratic Party. Commenting on the Conservatives' walk-out from parliament last week, he said: "The sun is setting on the white reactionaries of our country."

De Klerk's strategy, page 10

Dissident faces long sentence

Peking — A second dissident charged with trying to overthrow China's government went on trial in Peking yesterday. Liu Gang, a pro-democracy activist who was involved in the massive demonstrations of spring 1989, faces a minimum sentence of 10 years in prison (Catherine Campson writes).

Mr Liu, aged 29, is a physics graduate from Peking University. Constitutional law lecturer Chen Xiaoping was put on trial on Tuesday on the same charge of trying to overthrow the government. The authorities are expected to charge four people with this crime. The trials of journalist Wang Junao and economist Chen Ziming are expected to begin early next week. The sentences of the four men are expected to be announced before Chinese New Year on February 15.

Back to Earth

Moscow — The Salyut 7 space station was expected to crash back to Earth early today, Tass said. The craft, abandoned four years ago, would enter the lower atmosphere between 0100 and 0830 GMT. Officials said the bulk of the craft would burn up, but pieces weighing up to two tonnes would hit the ground. (Reuters)

45 die in attacks

Bogotá — Left-wing Colombian rebels launched attacks, killing at least 45 people, to protest against their exclusion from a specially elected assembly as it began reforming the country's constitution. Army and police sources said 25 guerrillas, 13 soldiers and policemen and seven civilians were killed. (Reuters)

Visit cancelled

Katmandu — The Dalai Lama, exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, has cancelled his planned visit to Nepal this month after strong objections from the Chinese embassy and political parties in Katmandu, Radio Nepal said. His visit was at the invitation of the Buddhist Welfare Association.

Rebels arrested

Manila — Two key army rebels have been arrested by Philippine security officials. Former Major Abraham Purugganan and former Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Batac were committed coup leaders.

Cambodia puts off general election

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN BANGKOK

CAMBODIA'S Vietnamese-installed government has postponed a general election planned for this year to promote a negotiated settlement of the country's civil war, the official SPK news agency reported yesterday.

Chea Sim, second in line in the ruling communist-style party, urged the guerrillas to agree to a truce and move ahead in peace talks, the agency reported. The state radio said, if the guerrillas do not want peace, Phnom Penh will hold parliamentary elections in 1992 to conform with the constitution.

The government and the three guerrilla groups have been engaged in slow-moving talks on a United Nations plan to end the 12-year-old war. The scheme calls for the UN to disarm the factions and be extensively involved in Cambodia's interim administration before organising an election.

Che Sim, chairman of the national assembly, spoke at the closing session on Saturday, the SPK report said. He

said that the national assembly, which was formed in 1981, had already extended its mandate by five years to this year.

"In reality, we are in a position unilaterally to organise the general elections in the framework of the state of Cambodia," he said. "But to favour the national reconciliation and the efforts of the international community for a political solution to the Cambodian problem, we agreed to extend the national assembly's mandate for one more year."

"Seizing this opportunity, the national assembly calls on the other side... to move forward to put an end to the conflict," he said.

However, Chea Sim again rejected the guerrillas' demand that the Cambodian government and army should be dissolved before elections so that they cannot manipulate the vote. Phnom Penh says that is a violation of the UN charter and an invitation for attacks by the Khmer Rouge, the strongest guerrilla group.



Home at last: Poota Prangme, aged 75, left, and Prong Nim-anong, aged 80, Thai soldiers who were stranded in Burma for nearly 50 years after fighting in the second world war, lighting candles yesterday during a welcome home

ceremony at the King Mengrai monument in Chiang Rai, Thailand. They crossed back into northern Thailand on Monday, according to Danai Kikontad, a government official (AP reports from Bangkok). The two soldiers

were sent to what is now Burma's Shan state in 1941 to fight the Chinese 93rd Kuomintang Division. When the war ended, the troops were expected to make it back home on their own. A Thai official met the two men when he

went to Burma last year. Mr Danai said Mr Poota, who has a Burmese wife and five children, was formerly attached to a transport unit and earned his living in Burma by driving lorries. Mr Prong lived in poverty in Burma, Mr Danai said.

Rebels to try men who shot US crew

From AP
IN SAN SALVADOR

GUERRILLAS being held for trial by their own forces for killing two American soldiers shot down in a military helicopter said they did so because the men had mortal injuries, a human rights worker said.

One of the Americans, Lieutenant-Colonel David Pickett, was also shot just after the crash when he disobeyed an order to put his hands up, one of the guerrillas of the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front told Maria Julia Hernandez, director of the Roman Catholic church's legal aid office.

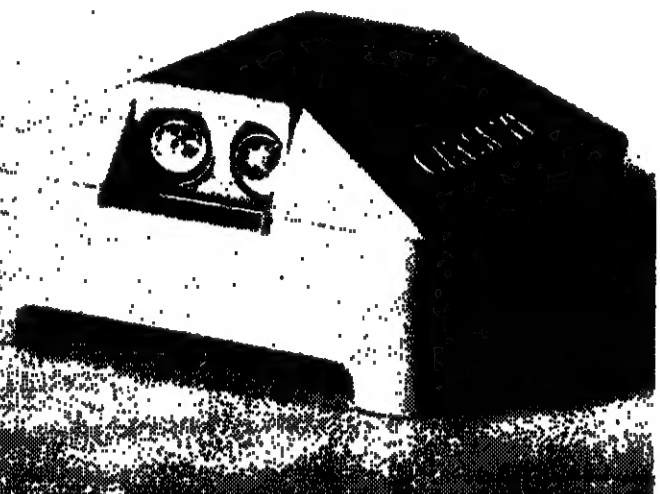
She spoke with Aparicio and Porfirio, the pseudonyms of the two accused guerrillas, in northeastern El Salvador on Sunday. The rebels say they will try the two for the killings.

Warrior Officer Daniel Scott, the helicopter pilot, was killed in the January 2 crash near Lolotique. Private Ernest Dawson had critical injuries from the crash. Since the survivors were in severe pain, Aparicio decided to kill them to end their suffering. Porfirio carried out the order.

NET EARNINGS POLAROID CORPORATION AND SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES 75 88 NET EARNINGS REFLECTING ADJUSTMENTS LIMITED 75 88 CALCULATED ON NOTIONAL 17/100 DOLLAR PER UNIT FOR SALES OF PING PONG CANS IN U.S.A. * 88

Catsys patent March '85. Financial benefit:

£2,340,776



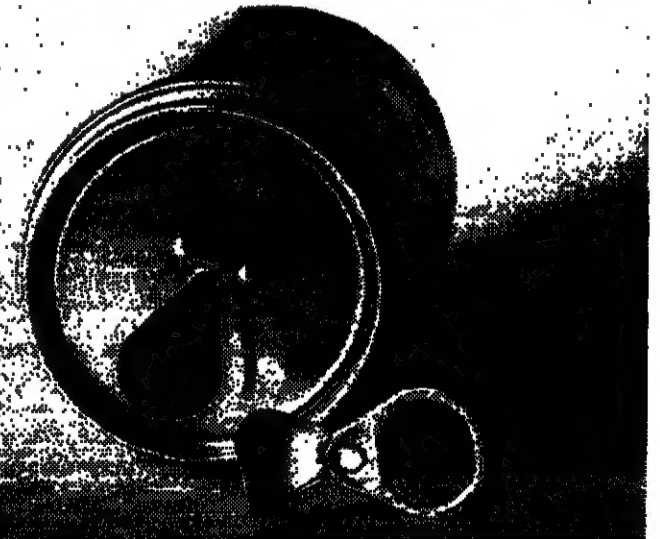
Polaroid patent June '85. Financial benefit:

\$603,000,000



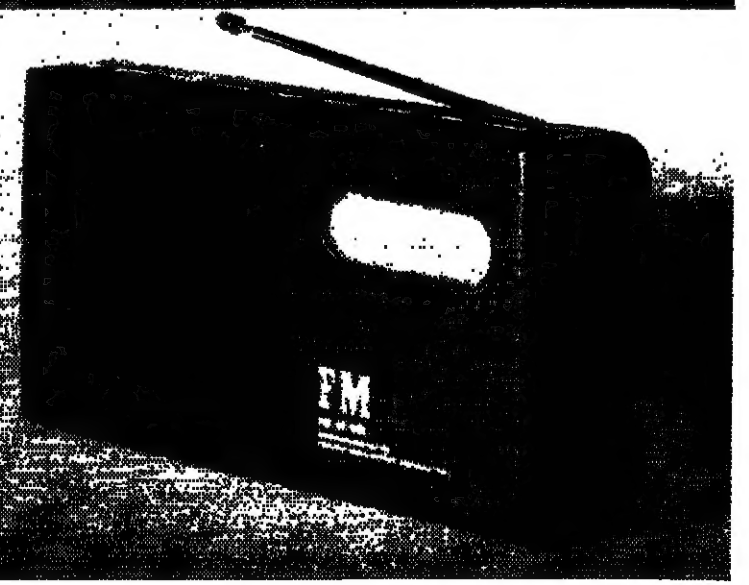
Ring-pull patent June '85. Financial benefit:

£49,000,000



No FM patent - No Financial benefit:

£0.00



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENIUS AND MADNESS IS PATENTLY OBVIOUS.

Taking out a patent can bring the

inventor quite a fortune.

Not taking one out however, (as with Edwin

Armstrong the American who discovered F.M.

radio.) may bring the inventor nothing but misery.

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The new man goes to war

Rebecca Nicolson

General Schwarzkopf, the Gulf war's icon of strength and manliness, has destroyed his cartoon image as Stormin' Norman. In an interview this week, he admitted he has constant nightmares that he will give an order that sends thousands of soldiers to their death. A real man has exposed his emotions to the scrutiny of the world: he has shown that war is not testosterone dreamland.

We expect maleness to be assertive, insensitive, aggressive and inherently militaristic; femaleness to be long-term, slow, round, gentle and nice. Fathering a child involves one quick shot; mothering takes a couple of decades.

This comforting polarisation of the genders has dominated the press in the past fortnight. Most of what we have seen and read so far is either macho glorification of missiles or the female complaint: "Isn't it unfair that they shout us down when we try to explain what war really involves?"

What is particularly striking is that those actually conducting the war — Bush, Major, Schwarzkopf, de la Billiere — and the allied pilots and navigators interviewed after returning from their missions have all failed to show any hint of machismo. Tom King, it must be said, has from time to time wandered off in ersatz-Churchillian, but that is how he has always dealt with things. Nevertheless, Mr King's style is radically out of date. It is too manliness-conscious for a war that feels different from previous wars not only because of the high-technology but because of the modesty with which it is conducted.

Pilots admit terror, generals admit ignorance, prime ministers eschew the big war-words so readily at hand. One only need think of the possible war vocabulary of either Mrs Thatcher or Michael Heseltine to realise with gratitude what it is to have such a non-rhetorical, managerial figure in Downing Street. President Bush's own impoverished rhetoric plays exactly the same role.

This is a New Age war, a war in which the general commanding the allied forces in the Gulf spends the best part of an afternoon briefing reporters on the environmental impact of an oil spill. What did General Haig have to say about the effect of British artillery barrages on the fragile plant communities of the Flanders fields? Or Montgomery on the welfare of desert lizards? Or Westmoreland on the destruction of tropical rainforests?

So something has happened here, something which perhaps it has taken a war to reveal. Sex roles, or at least femininity and masculinity, seem to have been shuffled. The press is decades behind the people with whom it is trying, in theory, to communicate. Don't most people respond to the elasticity, carelessness and lack of bombast in Mr Major's public statements so far? And don't those statements conform closely enough to what the columnists describe as an average woman's reaction to the war? And is John Major's "manliness" in any way diminished by that?

Perhaps the press needs educating in the ways of a world that has changed around it. And perhaps the realities of a land battle with weapons, graphics and briefings and the over-sugared women's-page attitude which is its twin.

Apartheid's last gasp: now the hard part

Conor Cruise O'Brien sets out the likely path to universal, free elections

The legal pillars of apartheid are about to fall. The Group Areas Act, the Land Act and, most basic of all, the Population Registration Act will all be repealed this year. The death of apartheid was so often proclaimed in the past — most frequently under P.W. Botha — that it is hard to realise it now really is dying.

With the repeal of the Population Registration Act, apartheid will lose its central nervous system. Hendrik Verwoerd's grandiose experiment ends in total failure, after 40 years of cruel, bureaucratic racial pederasty. And the party that acknowledged the failure, and ends apartheid, is the party that created it: the National party.

In terms of legal structures, the end of apartheid does no more than take South Africa back to where it was before 1948. F.W. de Klerk's achievement in ending apartheid should not be underestimated, but to move from there to a non-racial democracy is a more formidable task.

Last week, I spoke to some of those close to President de Klerk. I

found that they do want to move to a non-racial democracy — one adult, one vote — by the year 2000. But they want to move in stages. The first stage would be the enactment of a new constitution by the present three-chamber legislature (comprising separate assemblies for whites, Indians and mixed-race coloureds). The second stage would be the submission of the constitution to a referendum of all the people, without distinction of race. The third stage would be the creation under the new constitution of a racially mixed but non-elected interim government. And the fourth stage, near the end of the decade, would be elections on a non-racial basis.

Implicit in this scenario is the idea that South Africa has already had its last all-white general election. The vote of the three-chamber legislature and the new constitution, once endorsed by the people at large, would be held to

obviate the need for a fresh mandate from the white electorate.

To work, this audacious strategy will require a considerable degree of acquiescence from key people outside the National party, both black and white. Leaders of the African National Congress and the rival Inkatha have to be willing to proceed on a negotiation formula on these lines. On the white side, the security forces will have to acquiesce in the euthanasia of the all-white electorate.

I was sceptical about the fulfilment of both these conditions, but my interlocutors were soberly confident as far as the ANC is concerned, and I inferred that private discussions have been more encouraging than public statements suggest. It was conceded that when the ANC leadership agrees with the white leadership on a formula, many of the present ANC followers will defect, but it was felt that ANC leaders in the transitional govern-

ment could weather that storm.

The question of the security forces is more delicate. This is not an area in which direct questions can usefully be asked by an outsider, but I got the impression that my interlocutors would have been talking as they were only if senior members of the armed forces were aware of what is intended, and were not disposed to rule it out. The Afrikaner ruling class is quite small, and the distinction between its civil and military members is not rigid. Also, the idea that at some stage the all-white electorate will have to be by-passed has been around in those circles for some years now.

I recall a conversation in Cape Town in 1986 with a leading member of the Broederbond, of the *verligte* (enlightened) persuasion that now controls the National party. Speaking of the great transition, he said: "The white electorate will have to be put to sleep." The method he envisaged

was martial law, followed by non-racial elections. What is now envisaged is a more elegant method of attaining the same end.

Inevitably, those who seek a transition along these lines will be accused of bad faith. Why not hold non-racial elections now? The answer seems to be that early elections and negotiations may be incompatible. Those who are prepared to negotiate are liable to be superseded, electorally, by those who demand unconditional surrender of the whites and an immediate black takeover of the economy as well as of political power. But such a takeover would involve both blacks and whites in common ruin.

I have the impression that the ANC leadership is almost as wary of early non-racial elections as is Mr de Klerk. Both contemplate a period of interim non-racial government as a preliminary to non-racial elections.

I suggested to my Afrikaner

interlocutors that it might be helpful to involve the United Nations — both the Security Council and the secretary-general — in the preparation of non-racial elections, whether electoral consultations, whether by way of referendum or party to party negotiations. Willingness to let the UN monitor such preparation, and eventually supervise the election process, would go far to satisfy international opinion that a fundamental change, and not just clever cosmetics, is intended.

Although the UN has long had a bad name among white South Africans, I found my interlocutors receptive to this idea, partly because direct Security Council involvement would preclude disavowal of the South African position by the General Assembly. The European Community's decision last week to remove sanctions against South Africa once the basic laws of apartheid have been repealed — as promised by Mr de Klerk — is wise. Mr de Klerk deserves international support on his present course, which is necessarily a perilous one.

In contempt, and with reason

Bernard Levin argues that it is the arrogance of the judges, not sniping by the press, that has undermined public confidence in the judicial system

Not long ago, Lord Justice Taylor, widely canvassed as the next Lord Chief Justice, was whining in public about unfair criticism of the judiciary. Since no judge will ever admit that any criticism of the judiciary is fair, there was more than a touch of hypocrisy — that is, tautology — in his Lordship's argument. But one of the things he said still sticks in my gut. He said that the unfair criticism was "undermining public confidence in the judicial system".

I am well known for exaggerating the claim that the whole of the judiciary, and a good deal of the Bar, lives in a world entirely of its own, where the reality which the rest of us have to cope with is unknown. It is, I think, very significant that that charge — of unworlship — is the only one that really engages them. It would cause less upset if someone claimed that our judges take bribes. But surely you would agree that it is truly terrifying — for once the word is applied — that a most eminent jurist, who may shortly become the head of our judiciary, can demonstrate in public an ignorance so colossal and appalling as Lord Justice Taylor's claim that unfair criticism in the press (yes, of course that's what he put it down to) is "undermining public confidence", when it is certainly nearer 20 years than 10 since public confidence in the judicial system collapsed completely, because of the judges.

No, they do not take bribes; nor do they twist the evidence in order to convict a defendant whose face displeases them; nor do they pre-judge the cases before them; nor do they give longer sentences to black men than to white; indeed, they don't even fall asleep on the bench, or not very often. There are people who firmly believe all these things; indeed I know there are, because many of them write to me to tell me as much. I yearn to believe that our judges are crooked, but they are honest, and only an amazingly small proportion of them are stupid.

Why, then, the withdrawal of public confidence from them — a withdrawal that runs right through our society, by no means confined to those who harbour grudges?

The cause is threefold. First, they have again and again stolen from us rights that we were given by Parliament. I have written before about the scandalous way the judges have castrated Section 10 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, which protects journalists' sources except when "disclosure is necessary in the interests of justice or national security, or for the prevention of disorder or crime".

The absolutely unambiguous words of the statute have been turned inside out by judges; "necessary", "interests of justice", "national security" and "crime" have been reinterpreted so extravagantly that the protection of the statute has been entirely nullified, as was chillingly demonstrated by the case of William Goodwin. He wanted to investigate the financial affairs of a company, but it managed to put him in the dock and demand the source of his information. He was fined £5,000 and was lucky to escape prison, although the law which Parliament passed gave him complete immunity.

The judges' claim to have an authority higher than Parliament and the laws it makes was for centuries used with great discretion; nowadays they simply hide behind the Common Law when they want to do something the law forbids. I do not know quite when the arrogation of which I speak began, though the infamous judgment of Lord Simonds in the *Ladies Directory* case, when a law was invented to convict a man who had not broken an existing one, must have played a part. This is what he said: you can practically hear the self-satisfaction:

Let it be supposed that at some future date, homosexual practices... are no longer a crime. Would it not be an offence if, even without obscenity, such practices were publicly advocated...? Or must we wait

until Parliament finds time to deal with such conduct? If the common law was powerless to act... we should no longer do her reverence. But her hand is still powerful and it is for Her Majesty's Judges to play the part... It matters little what label is given to the offending act — an affront to public decency, a corruption of morals, the creation of a public mischief, the undermining of moral conduct.

The second blow to the previously widespread respect for the judiciary has come from the hideous growth in miscarriages of justice in recent years, and from the way the judges, particularly the senior ones, have lamentably failed, again and again, in their duty to see that such scandals do not take place. I repeat, I am not suggesting bias, let alone anything worse; but the mind-set of our higher judges is so encrusted with 40-year-old ideas — in particular that the word of the police is, other things being equal, always to be preferred to that of the accused — that it is a wonder anybody is ever acquitted.

If you think I am overdoing things, read the judgment of Lord Lane in the 1988 (unsuccessful) Birmingham Six appeal. I haven't enough space to quote it, but I have just looked through it, and I think it no shame to admit that I found tears in my eyes as I saw an honourable, decent, old man who has loved and served the law throughout his life, surviving with all his force to do justice, and so hopelessly, ineptly, tragically out of his depth that the proceedings might have been in Martin for all he chance that he might see what lay behind the evidence and measure it correctly.

"The worst is not, while we can say 'This is the worst'." The day before yesterday, in the Court of Appeal, a visitor could have seen the third of the reasons which have helped to destroy the respect due to the judiciary, and which Lord Justice Taylor presumably still thinks is all got up by the



press. For the third assault is the public's revulsion at the *arrogance* of too many of our judges. I am not, of course, thinking of Judge Pickles with his dog-eared cuttings album or Mr Justice Michael Davies demeaning himself with his "jokes" about his motor-car; the average citizen's attitude to the judiciary is sufficiently robust to distinguish between the chaff and the wheat. But it was the wheat that was in the limelight on Tuesday, where even more serious grounds for complaint by Lord Justice Taylor could

have been found. For it is the territorial claims made at the highest judicial level that constitute the third nail in the coffin of public respect, so gross in their self-importance is the judges' demands on the obedience of the rest of us.

Once again, the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad was being discussed. The case before the Appeal Court concerned a Mr Binham, who alleges that he was "fitted up" by them; naturally, I make no comment on the guilt or innocence of anyone concerned. But I can at least reveal that in the

forthcoming appeal of the man who had made the complaint, the Crown Prosecution Service had given notice that it would not be contesting, or putting forward evidence against, the appeal.

That, you would think, would be that. Whatever words or jargon wrapped up the message, it was unambiguous: the CPS could not proceed because it was not safe to do so. That was what happened in the Guildford Four case; the prosecution threw their hands in, and the court very properly rubber-stamped the decision.

But never again, if Lord Justice Russell, who was sitting in the Appeal Court on the Binham case, has any say in the matter. Plainly seething with perfectly genuine indignation, he asked, somewhat rhetorically, "Do you know of anything in our constitution or our law that enables anybody to pronounce a verdict as unsafe and unsatisfactory except this court?" Warning him to work, he went on thus: "It is for court and this court alone to take the decision; it is not for the Crown Prosecution Service, not for the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General or the Home Secretary." And if you think that although the judge demanded the right to decide the matter, in practice he would always follow a prosecution withdrawal, I must tell you that in 1975 (not 1977) in a case on appeal, the Appeal Court and the House of Lords forbade the prosecution to capitulate, and convicted a man against whom the evidence was that which the prosecution said was worthless.

We can — we should — sympathise. The higher courts have lately had a bad time; unused to serious, sustained and pointed criticism, they have tended to withdraw into the circle of wagons and wait for the Indians to go away. The Indians, however, are still galloping round the stables, and making ever more noise. The idea that the judges are very far indeed from perfect is now not at all strange, and no wonder Lord Justice Russell blew up. But in the light of the next day's morning he should have recognised his mistake in doing so. The worst thing I know about the judges and their attitude is that I am sure he will not have done so.

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

The Savoy Hotel is angry. I do not blame the Savoy Hotel. When one is so steadily at the dispensing end of immaculate behaviour, other people's social trespasses must be especially hurtful; well-mannered umbrage was taken at an article by a tabloid journalist writing about the recession in the tourist trade.

This representative of the fourth estate booked a minimum-priced, quite-a-bargain-when-you-come-to-think-of-it double room, facing nowhere in particular, for £195 a night; told reception that she was on her honeymoon, could she have a better room, and was upgraded to a suite overlooking the Thames; she also received a bottle of champagne and a bowl of fruit, which is the way of things when you spend your wedding night at our most prestigious hotel.

Her advice to readers was: "The more you bargain, the more you save." The Savoy, not wishing it to be generally known that in the hotel trade, as elsewhere, the more fussy you make the better the deal you obtain, has taken the narrow view and is considering an action for deception on the grounds that she said she was on her honeymoon when she was not on her honeymoon. Therefore she obtained goods and services by fraud.

It would be a fun case to take to court. Some 40 years ago, a seaman met a girl in a bar in Liverpool, told her he was a steward on a

transatlantic liner, and the girl confided to him that it was her great ambition to visit New York. No trouble, said the seaman; if you like, I will sneak you into my cabin before we leave for the States in the morning, lock the door so that no-one will stumble across you, black out the porthole for extra security, and just so long as you keep very quiet and do what you are told, you can be in America in a week.

It was agreed. In the dead of that night she was smuggled on board and hidden in the cabin. And for the next six days she stayed *in situ*, alone, while the steward worked, sharing his off-duty hours within the confines of four narrow walls between his shifts. On the seventh day, noticing that her friend had forgotten to lock the cabin door, the girl slipped out on deck for a change of scenery and found herself at Bootle Docks on board the Isle of Man steamer. She took the man to court, claiming that she had entered into an agreement: a week of her services against a transatlantic voyage; she had delivered her part of the deal and had been defrauded. The judge awarded her the price of a round trip to New York in a luxury liner.

In similar vein, were the hotel to take the journalist to court, the judge might order her to marry her "honeymoon" escort, then direct them to spend their wedding night in a run-of-the-mill £195 bedroom, sans wine, sans fruit.

The tabloid's defence would be that it is of service to readers to know of bargains to be found during a recession; indeed, the article goes on a bit about where you can get upgrades — apparently everywhere except in Market Harborough.

What I find cheerless about the article is the contention that the more you haggle, the better you do, because the consequence of that reasoning is that if you accept what you are first offered, you are doing less well than you should.

I have been in countries where bargaining is a way of life; where you ask the price of an article or service and the seller answers it with an opening bid. It is a grubby, time-consuming, unedifying business which removes the sense of achievement that comes with an acquisition, leaving you with a nagging unease about the wisdom of your purchase.

My daughter is into upgrades; she tells the clerk at the airline ticket desk: "My father writes for *The Times*, please could I sit in business class on my economy ticket?" Now and then it works, for airlines, like good hotels, do what they can to please their customers.

Last week, on a flight to Los Angeles, she managed to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with other upgraded passengers; at the back of the plane a couple of dozen folk on cut-price, bucket-shop excursions each had a row of five seats on which to stretch out and sleep.

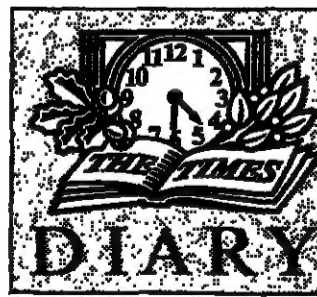
Change and continuity

Bernard Weatherill, Speaker of the House of Commons, is to announce his retirement shortly. The man with one of Westminster's best-known voices will stand down before the next election to enable a successor to be appointed before the new parliament is convened.

Weatherill was widely expected to announce his intention on his 70th birthday last year. But as it fell only days after Mrs Thatcher's resignation, the announcement was postponed, and friends now say it is unlikely to be made before the end of hostilities in the Gulf.

Weatherill has come under increasing pressure from his constituency association in Croydon North East to announce his decision formally so that a successor can be nominated. Informally, the battle for the succession has already started, and one of the front-runners is Weatherill's 40-year-old barrister son, also Bernard, who has failed to secure a nomination in a number of other seats. Supporters of Weatherill junior say the very name would attract many floating voters because of his father's strong personal following in a seat he has held for 26 years.

At Westminster there is already intense jockeying to succeed Weatherill as Speaker, in part because of the high profile the job now enjoys thanks to the television cameras. Labour believes it should have a turn, while many Tories see no reason not to use their large majority to elect another of their own. Either way, the first woman Speaker may be on the cards: the Opposition's favoured candidate is Betty Boothroyd, a deputy Speaker, while Dame Janet Fookes is the preferred choice of many Tories.



Two of the Tories' rising young stars came unstuck on their first visit to Chequers last weekend. William Hague, FPs to the chancellor, Norman Lamont, had a brush with security guards as he tried to prise open the boot of his Ford Sierra for inspection. It remained stubbornly closed, and he was told to abandon the car and walk. Equally embarrassed was Rob Hayward, who bade farewell to the Majors and then found his Jaguar would not start. He tinkered under the bonnet, until in desperation he prodded the starter motor with an umbrella, whereupon the engine burst into life.

Saddam's friends

The Committee to Stop the Gulf War was deeply embarrassed yesterday by revelations that some of its members are openly committed to a military victory for Saddam Hussein. Set up by Tony Benn, church figures and CND, the committee wants the Iraqis to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait, and reacted angrily to the discovery that the Socialist Workers' Party, which is represented on the committee, wants the allied forces to be defeated.

"We are for the defeat of America and the victory of Iraq," wrote John Molyneux, the party's ideologue, in *Socialist Worker* before war broke out. Confirming that stand yes-

terday, Chris Banbury, the SWP organiser, said: "Our position has been spelt out to other committee members. We are calling for the defeat of America."

Although the SWP is insignificant in itself, its link with the stop-the-war committee could greatly embarrass Labour MPs and others who have shared the committee's platforms. "These lunatics have not told the committee their view," says Marjorie Thompson, chairman of both CND and the



committee. "I'm not going to allow people like this to impede our efforts. If they come to our meeting next week we shall show them the door."

No pen pal

The theatrical partnership between Jeffrey Archer and Sir Peter Hall is proving an uneven one. Hall's company, under the patronage of Archer, has taken up residence in the Playhouse Theatre, London, where its first production, *Twelfth Night*, opens later this month.

Archer, who owns the theatre, has been telling anyone who will listen of his regard for Hall's work, beginning when he was on the arts committee of the old GLC and Hall was director of the National Theatre. "I am so excited by this partnership," Archer enthused

yesterday en route to a speaking tour of Tory marginals in Lancashire. "I believe Sir Peter is our greatest living theatre director."

But while no-one denies that the two men get on well, the artistic admiration is not necessarily reciprocated. A leading critic of Tory arts policy who once considered standing as a Labour parliamentary candidate, Hall admits that he has never seen an Archer play or read any of his novels. A straw-poll of the distinguished cast found a similar ignorance of their patron's bestseller. The only exception was Martin Jarvis — but he had been paid to read Archer, for two "talking book" cassettes.

Canvassing opinion

BC's *Antiques Roadshow* is trying to identify the painter of an unsigned picture submitted by Edward Heath when Hugh Scully and his team of experts recently recorded a programme in Salisbury. "It was brought in by Mr Heath's housekeeper, who queued with other members of the public," says Christopher Lewis, the producer. The painting is a 19th-century pastel of the beach at Broadstairs in Kent, Heath's birthplace, and was once owned by Sir John Bejerman. Heath admired it on a visit to the poet's home, and was astonished when, shortly after, it was delivered to him as a gift.

"I know the exact spot where the artist must have sat to paint it," says Lewis. "I have always wanted to discover who it was."



SADDAM'S BOGUS APPEAL

The Syrian foreign minister's arrival in Britain yesterday, and the warming of relations between London and Damascus which it signifies, is a reminder of the moral compromises which have already been made by the West in the cause of the Gulf war. But bridges between the Arab world and the West have never been more necessary.

Arab nations are often tempted to reconcile family quarrels by uniting against a common foe. The Iraqi president did not need to utter the word *jihad*. This war has brought together the most volatile elements of a potent demonology: the presence of the American and British imperialist arch-enemies alongside Israel; the proximity of Islam's holiest shrines; contempt for the wealthy Gulf states; Saddam Hussein as a kind of Arab Robin Hood. So far, this has not dented the purpose of the Arab members of the allied coalition, but they are only too aware of the perils.

Hostility to the allied bombardment was predictable and predicted. But the fact that Saddam's appeal for a holy war came as no surprise does not make it easier to deal with. Most Muslims, whether Arab or not, are not natural sympathisers with Saddam. He is probably responsible for the deaths of more of his co-religionists than any other man alive. He is a follower of the Ba'athist ideology; that is, a militantly secular and socialist brand of pan-Arabism. Images of the Iraqi leader's head bowed in prayer are recent and, as evidence of piety, unconvincing. Unlike Saladin, with whom he likes to compare himself, he is not chivalrous. He is a bad Muslim. He has no religious authority whatever for declaring *jihad*.

Yet Saddam can mesmerise. He plays for the hearts of those Muslims whose instinct it is to recoil from the wrath now visited upon Iraq. That titanic accumulation of firepower, symbolised by the battleship *Missouri* on which the Japanese once signed a humiliating surrender, inevitably horrifies many Muslims who retain a degree of fraternal feeling for the plight of their Iraqi brothers. Their natural emotions make them vulnerable to the appeal to solidarity.

A great medieval Arab scholar, Ibn Khaldun, depicted the history of mankind as a cyclical process in which nomadic peoples created empires, were corrupted by success, and fell victim to more warlike conquerors.

Saddam's appeal was that of the warrior who promised to sweep away an effeminate Kuwaiti civilisation. Now it is he who looks like the underdog. That image, too, he will milk for all it is worth.

There are many Muslims who see these things differently: more soberly and more rationally. Such people remember that they are also brothers of the many thousands of murdered and beggared Kuwaitis; and of the foreign workers — almost all Muslims — whom Iraqi press gangs are reported to be enlisting by force; of the Kurds, Shia Iraqis and countless others whom Saddam has persecuted. There are millions who know the West and do not regard the alliance against Saddam as a betrayal and an abomination. But in some countries, especially the Maghreb countries of North Africa, the balance is in danger of tipping against the voices of moderation.

Appreciating these feelings, the allies have rightly done everything in their power to persuade Iraq to resist retaliation, so far with success. Otherwise, none of this will be allowed to affect the central thrust of the conduct of the war. Nor should it. Even without Arab opinion to consider, the allied commanders would be making every effort to kill as few civilians as is compatible with paralysing the Iraqi military. Even taking Iraqi casualty figures at their face value, fewer than one civilian has been killed for every hundred sorties.

This is not the war of annihilation which Saddam would have his potential supporters believe. It is a war of limited aims, and it is still being pursued with proportionate means. Saddam is and always has been the preacher of total war, like Goebbels after Stalingrad. He is the apostle of terror tactics; it is he who conjures with weapons of mass destruction. As President Mubarak of Egypt said recently, Saddam's plans for expansion almost certainly embraced other Gulf states.

But the reawakening of an atavistic, anti-Western current within the Islamic commonwealth will most certainly affect the character of the peace, once Iraq is defeated. If a Muslim backlash is to be avoided, preventive measures must be taken now. Winning the peace, even more than winning the war, will depend on a sensitive appreciation of Arab realities.

LONDON'S SELF-DEFEAT

Even before the first qualifying round has started, London seems to have eliminated itself from the competition to hold the millennium Olympics. The British Olympic Committee insists it must have not more than one bid per city in by tomorrow. But the two rival groups preparing plans for the capital appeared comprehensively to have tripped each other up, leaving Manchester as Britain's sole surviving contender.

Manchester's great advantage is that it exists, and London does not — not, that is, as a single corporate entity. The need to have a city-wide authority able to organise a bid for the Olympics every 40 years or so is not sufficient reason by itself to reinvent the Greater London Council. But had the GLC not been abolished, County Hall would have made an excellent place in which to knock heads together. In its absence, division rules.

The formidable offer made by Manchester for the 1996 Games was defeated, it seems, because most European votes went to the International Olympic Committee went to Athens, which did not win anyway. A London bid for the 2000 Games would have been stronger even than Manchester's.

Bringing the Olympics to Britain is a highly desirable aim. The capital's advantage is that it boasts the best international communications in Europe and possibly the world. Some of the necessary sports facilities already exist in or around the capital. In August, London could absorb with little pain the influx of tens of thousands of competitors and spectators. Such small inconvenience to those in parts of west London that the Games might have produced would have been compensated for by

a profit, probably measured in hundreds of millions of pounds, to the capital's and the nation's economy. Londoners will find it hard to believe that the two groups preparing bids let petty top-dogery stand in the way of such wealth, but somehow they managed it.

So far the London Council of Sport and Recreation and the umbrella body called London Olympic 2000 have been sullenly silent about the reasons for the breakdown between them. But two groups which were unable to agree even on the terms of the bid itself would hardly be likely to run well together on the long road ahead. As every sportsman knows there is a time for competitiveness and a time for team spirit, and the trick is to tell the two apart. At least the ending of London's chances for the 2000 Olympics will spare the capital nine years of internal bickering among the organisers; but there is nothing else to relieve what has proved a sorry performance.

London should not be stinting in its support for Manchester's bid now. The Central Council for Physical Recreation, which had backed the London 2000 Olympic group, should also switch its loyalties north.

The government's hands-off approach towards Birmingham's bid for the 1992 Games and Manchester's for the Games after that needs to be rethought, given the governmental backing that the likely bids from Peking, Milan, Sydney, Istanbul and others can expect. In London's case, unfortunately, public beneficence to assist a bid might have been throwing good money after bad. Manchester — leaner, fitter, hungrier — deserves better.

INSERT CARD, ANXIOUSLY

Those in the habit of removing cash card from shirt pocket and placing it on top of washing machine while doing the laundry — desist. Today's report from *Which?* warns that the result could be to corrupt the magnetic field on the card. They might, of course, join the handful of people for whom the hole in the wall turns fruit machine and churns out bank notes in their tens or hundreds, briefly tempting them to say nothing before conscience prevails. More likely the hole will swallow the card, leaving the cardless punter virtually deprived of citizenship through a long weekend of dried haricots and old TV movies.

That the two great innovations of 20th-century civilisation should thus prove inimical to each other has a certain piquancy. The washing machine has done more for women's liberation than the collected works of Virago, but its timers, filters and pumps so often fail when the wash is biggest and the engineer on the highest rates of overtime. The cash card exhibits an analogous tendency. The ombudsman for the banks and the ombudsman for the building societies report that they receive more complaints about cash dispensers than anything else.

The "phantom withdrawal" where the bank statement says that you were withdrawing cash in Balham when you *know* you were in Biarritz, has become a modern icon, symbolising the love-hate relationship between people and their mechanical slaves. In most cases the phantom withdrawer turns out to be all too human. In theory, only the

bank and the customer know the personal identification number, the PIN. In practice, human memory being what it is, the PIN-holder keeps a note somewhere. A friend or relative strapped for cash falls to temptation. Only occasionally does the ombudsman find mechanical malfunction. More usually, the choice is to prosecute granny and/or the kids, or to pay up and shut up.

The majority of cases does not, however, mean all cases. It has been recently alleged that malefactors have discovered a way of removing from the cash dispensers of the Clydesdale bank large sums of money which were debited to customers' accounts. The case has struck fear into all banks, which have worked on the theory that the technology is impeccable. They fear a collapse in their customers' confidence in the machines.

Inevitably in a technological age, the solution sought will be technological. There is talk of cash cards that work by recognising the retina of the customer's eye or by checking fingerprints. Whether such a mechanism would indeed thwart the ingenuity of the dedicated defrauder is more doubtful. The faultless banknote dispenser may prove as elusive a holy grail as the prison from which escape is impossible. In the meantime, everyone has to proceed on the basis that the chance of being ripped off by a cash machine is rather less than that of being ripped off by the human cashier it is gradually superseding. The occasional hole in the wallet is a small price to pay for the omni-available hole in the wall.

The shape of UN things to come

From Brigadier P. R. Duchesne (read)

Sir, Having served as deputy commander and chief of staff of the UN Force in Cyprus for two years, as well as in a variety of appointments in 7th Armoured Division, in 1st Armoured Division and in the US 101st Airborne Division (all now serving in the Gulf), I feel our great hopes for the UN after World War II were dashed by the clear lack of unity amongst the "United" Nations and, more particularly, amongst the great powers on the Security Council.

At last we have an opportunity to realise the dream of many of the architects of the UN to create an effective peacemaking and peace-keeping body. Were the new-found consensus to falter at this first hurdle in the Gulf, untold damage would be done to future hopes.

The aggression of Iraq under Saddam Hussein cannot be disputed and I have no doubt that the coalition forces will evict him from Kuwait in the next few weeks. Of crucial importance is planning for the peace. My hopes are that a reinvigorated UN, with a much strengthened military staff committee, will be encouraged by the five permanent members of the Security Council to take the lead in the peacekeeping that must follow.

Failure to act now could make disengagement from the Gulf more difficult than the present military action. The creation of a UN observer force, on its own, could simply discredit the UN in the aftermath of the present action.

Yours sincerely,
ROBIN DUCHESNE,
Lake Lodge,
Churt, Farnham, Surrey.
February 3.

From Sir John Tilney

Sir, With reference to Margaret Quass's letter (February 2) on a UN force for the Gulf, for decades I have advocated an individually-recruited multi-national United Nations force, well trained, well armed, and well paid on the lines of a mixture between the Knights Templars and the French Foreign Legion. The terms of service should be for years as a minimum, yet no one should be asked to fight against his or her own country.

This world force should be paid for with moneys provided by the United Nations, supplemented by revenues from the licensing of mining and fisheries in a UN-controlled Antarctica.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TILNEY,
3 Victoria Square, SW1.
February 3.

From Mrs René MacColl

Sir, In addition to Professor Kirkwood's suggestion (January 21) that if the Secretary-General of the

Lessons on spelling

From Mrs Angela Foreman

Sir, Whilst agreeing with the general sentiments of David Lipsey's article, "English as she is" (January 26), I would like to correct his misconception regarding dyslexia.

Yes, it certainly can be a distressing affliction, but it is not suffered by only a few. The Dyslexia Institute's latest campaign, "One in 25", states that one in 25 people suffer from dyslexia. There are 350,000 dyslexics in our schools — an average of one in every classroom. Many of these are undiagnosed and consequently misunderstood.

Mr Lipsey also states that "parents of poor spellers have adapted the term 'dyslexic' to mask weak spelling. As parents of dyslexic children will know, their difficulties cover a wide range and may include many aspects of speech, language, literacy, numeracy, co-ordination, uncertainty over time and direction and organisation."

Early identification and specialist

Ebb or flow

From Mr Geoffrey Cuttle

Sir, Mr Gould-Hacker (January 26) can observe two existing ring mains around London, but draw little comfort from their flow patterns. The Circle Line of the Underground system shows that although flow can be observed in both directions it is generally, no matter where one stands, is principally in the opposite direction to that desired.

Women in medicine

From the Dean of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Sir, Mr J. E. Dussek (February 2) has a point: most women do not want to be surgeons or politicians. The reasons for this make an interesting debate in themselves. However, he is not correct in asserting that we are only excluded because we choose to be.

Women's decisions to pursue particular medical specialties, or political activities, are made in context. There are major hurdles to be faced before reaching the appointments and selections committees which he describes.

Not least of these is the steady discouragement provided by most male "mentors" creating the appearance of "men-only" jobs and therefore seeming to require exceptional determination to progress in a field such as surgery. Similar discouragement appears to pertain in the political field.

In contrast, members of my own college have, in general, been most supportive and encouraging of women and their aspirations, believing that the specialty will be

enhanced if it reflects the numerical balance of the sexes.

Yours faithfully,
FIONA CALDICOTT, Dean,
The Royal College of Psychiatrists,
17 Belgrave Square, SW1.
February 4.

From Mrs Charles J. Lewis

Sir, Mr Dussek may well be a whizz with thoraxes, but he demonstrates a woeful ignorance of the workings of our society when he writes that opportunities in medicine and politics are already equal for the sexes.

The reason for a lack of female applicants for the higher professional posts is not that women do not want such jobs as he suggests; it is that, having devoted their childhood years to making it possible for the thoracic surgeons (or even lawyers) of this world to fulfil their potential, they themselves are by then out of the running.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES LEWIS,
2 Paper Buildings, Temple, EC4.
February 4.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

United Nations moved the headquarters closer to the scene of conflict so that the world community could be closely identified with the achievement of peace, it would also seem better that UN decisions in war or peacetime should not be thought of as US decisions.

Professor Kirkwood mentions Geneva but favours Cairo. Might not Jerusalem, the centre of so many faiths, make a magnificent situation for an outpost of the UN, the international peace-keeping agency?

Yours faithfully,
M. H. MACCOLL,
17 Cloister House, Griffiths Road,
Wimbledon, SW19.
February 4.

From Mr C. D. Ellis
Sir, You report today (February 5) an American general as saying that more than 44,000 sorties had been flown since the start of the Gulf war — "one a minute".

By my calculations the Americans seem to be placing the start of the war a good ten days before the expiry of the UN deadline on January 15. Were British troops also involved in this "breach" of UN resolution 678?

Yours faithfully,
C. D. ELLIS,
18 Upper Old Park Lane,
Farnham, Surrey.
February 5.

teaching can help all these children to have the confidence and determination to succeed.

It is a pity *The Times* is disinclined to employ those whose letters of application contain misspellings. They may be missing out on a wealth of other talents in many dyslexic people.

Yours faithfully,
A. FOREMAN,
Ferry Road,
East Barnet, Hertfordshire.
January 29.

From Mrs P. A. Woolley

Sir, Non-standard spelling leads inexorably to phonetic spelling. Would its protagonists care to address themselves to problems of a correspondence between, for example, a Glaswegian and a citizen of Nashville, Tennessee?

Yours faithfully,
PENELOPE WOOLLEY,
Le Pavillon,
Sark, Channel Islands.
February 3.

More sadly the M25 provides evidence that more modern ring-main developments hardly flow at all.

I fear Londoners must prepare themselves for stagnant water.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY CUTTLE,
Lynwood,
35 Mount Hermon Road,
Woking, Surrey.
February 4.

enhanced if it reflects the numerical balance of the sexes.

Yours faithfully,
FIONA CALDICOTT, Dean,
The Royal College of Psychiatrists,
17 Belgrave Square, SW1.
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CHARLES LEWIS,
2 Paper Buildings, Temple, EC4.
February 4.

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Financial curbs on NHS trusts

From Dr Stephen Hunter

Sir, Your editorial (January 30) suggests that it is "dreadful news" that William Waldegrave, the health secretary, is to retain national agreements on pay and conditions for junior doctors. The same editorial eloquently shows why, on the contrary, this is a good idea for the government and the health service: "NHS trusts are still within the public sector because the government wishes to deny the charge that the health service is being dismantled."

Junior doctors move from hospital to hospital to get the high-quality training and experience which the public rightly demands we have, on appointment to its career posts. Until the age of 37 we can be employed on six-month contracts with limited continuity.

To allow NHS trusts to set their own pay rates for junior doctors would invite them to reduce our pay, not increase it, forcing us to choose between training and salary — in other words, to pay for our own training.

Doctors in training and their future patients can applaud Mr Waldegrave's recognition that they are "a national resource and not just employees of any individual unit."

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN HUNTER (Chairman,
Hospital Junior Staff Committee),
British Medical Association,
BMA House,
Tavistock Square, WC1.
January 31.

From Dr T. J. Bayley

Sir, The secretary of state for health and his departmental advisers deserve the thanks of doctors in the training grades and those providing their education for the decision that national agreements on their pay and conditions should apply in NHS trusts. The pay and conditions of these future consultants provide them with opportunities for training, in exchange for a very considerable contribution to the health service, including out-of-hours work; yet NHS trusts would not have been expected to abide by these.

The acceptance of the case made

by the medical royal colleges, and by those concerned with regional organisation (including regional general managers), is not a reflection of persistence by the medical lobby, as you allege, but an appreciation of the educational system, which has been and still is being developed.

The product of postgraduate medical education is a prime resource which ensures that patients in the health service of the future are well served by hospital consultants, doctors in public health medicine and general practice principals. It is not for financial self-interest that their training has been protected, but to allow planning and management of their education to meet health-care needs.

Yours faithfully,
T. J. BAYLEY (Dean for
Postgraduate Medical Education),
University of Liverpool,
Postgraduate Office,
Faculty of Medicine,
PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX.
February 1.

From Mr Alexander P. Ross

Sir, Mr Waldegrave announced his decision that NHS trusts would be expected to abide by national agreements on pay and conditions for junior doctors not, as you report, to the Royal College of Surgeons but to a meeting of the Joint Consultants Committee composed of presidents of the medical royal colleges and representatives of the BMA. He did so because he had been persuaded by the educational arguments for retaining national terms and conditions for junior doctors.

Far from demonstrating the staying power of the medical lobby, as your leading article suggests, it demonstrates that the secretary of state is prepared to listen to reasoned argument before he reaches a decision.

Yours faithfully,
ALEXANDER P. ROSS
(Chairman, Joint Consultants
Committee),
25 Canon Street,
Winchester, Hampshire.
February 2.

DNA testing

From Professor G. Jenkins and Dr P. Lincoln

Sir, Dr Brian Sheard's comment (January 28) that 30 per cent of suspects presented for DNA testing to the Metropolitan Police Laboratory are eliminated, is very interesting. This appears to imply that nearly one out of three of suspects presented to his laboratory are, in fact, innocent. This is a considerable number and one wonders how many suspects were selected and presented for investigation.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE JENKINS (President),
PATRICK LINCOLN (Chairman
of the Executive Council,
The British Academy of
Forensic Sciences),
Department of Haematology,
The Royal London Hospital, E1.
February 1.

From Mr Grahame G. Bell

Sir, The main objections that your correspondents (January 19, 28) have raised on the subject of a DNA "fingerprinting" register are cost and individual liberty.

One reason for the increase in crime is the decreasing chance of getting caught. There are something like 3,300 reported each year in England and Wales every one of which might quickly be solved were there such a register. The totality of police time, court time and cost of imprisoning offenders is in excess of

£15,000 per case. The cost of genetic fingerprinting could be spread over several years by beginning with the age groups most likely to offend. The beauty of such a system is that the cost benefits would be up front. Once in place updating procedures would cost considerably less than the benefits to be gained.

With regard to civil liberties many women and children are reluctant to venture outside their homes, especially after dark, unless accompanied. I suggest that such a register would return civil liberties to far more people than those from whom it would take them away.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAME G. BELL,
Sharnock, The Avenue,
Ascot, Berkshire.
February 2.

From Professor G. L. Rogers

Sir, There has been much discussion of the idea of setting up a register of DNA details for every adult male in the population.

If we knew how long it took to determine a DNA profile we could then multiply by the number of adults in the country and divide by the number of laboratories which can carry out such tests. It would give us some idea of how long it would take to compile.

Yours sincerely,
G. L. ROGERS,
Badgers Holt, 3 Vales Road,
Budleigh Salterton, Devon.
February 1.

The new millennium

From Mr John F. Martin

Sir, The first leader in your issue of January 1, 1900, commenced, "The New Year, the last of the Nineteenth Century, which begins to-day, is not unlikely to mark a turning point in the history of the British Empire."

This perceptive observation should be sufficient authority to convince your present readers as to where you stood then, and presumably where you stand now, on the commencement date of a century.

Yours truly,
JOHN F. MARTIN,
57 Tyeoburst Hill,
Loughton, Essex.
February 4.

From Miss R. J. Butterworth, FRCS

Sir, Mr Dussek is correct to assert that women are not discriminated against in applications for surgical posts. However, to infer from this that the reason for the very low number of female surgeons is that women are not interested in surgery is an over-simplification.

The career structure for junior surgeons is so arduous that no surgeon, male or female, can complete it without detriment to personal and family life. Present custom in this country allows men to leave child and home care (albeit reluctantly) to their wives, but seldom vice-versa.

Thus most women, however able and motivated towards surgery, do not pursue it as a career because the expected cost in personal terms is too high.

When reform of the structure of surgical training allows all junior surgeons to have personal as well as professional lives, Mr Dussek will see that women are not as apathetic as he supposes.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. BUTTERWORTH,
Southminster Road, Penylan,
Cardiff, South Glamorgan.
February 2.

Sick pay challenge

From Lord Boyd-Carpenter

Sir, Your leading article (February 5), entertainingly headed "Sick as a lord", uncharacteristically ignores three main objections to the Statutory Sick Pay Bill. These are:

1. Economic: a time when there is a measure of recession in the economy is a time when it is economic folly deliberately to increase employers' costs.

2. Social: a measure which imposes part of the costs of sick pay on an employer must tend to cause some employers to discriminate against employees with actual or potential sickness tendencies.

3. Administrative: it is normal government practice when legislation affecting particular sections or interests is being considered to have consultations with them before introducing legislation. The government can thus make concessions on the proposals without exposing itself to publicity and political trouble. In this case there was no such consultation before the introduction of the bill and precious little after.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.
BOYD-CARPENTER,
House of Lords.
February 5.

Pennies from heaven?

From the Bishop of Buckingham

Sir, Like Mr King (January 30) I have received neither a refund nor shares in the electricity company to which I applied. But I await the post more eagerly than he. I have been electrified so far to receive £3,900 in returned cheques and 100 shares from eight other companies, for none of which I have subscribed a penny.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON H. BURROWS,
Sheridan, Grims Hill,
Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire.
February 6.

Sellafield sends nuclear waste to the glasshouse

Now radioactive rubbish is to be sealed in crystal blocks for safety

Engineers believe they have found a safe method of disposing of highly active waste products. This month, Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, will open a £240 million plant at Sellafield that turns lethal nuclear wastes into glass blocks for ever, without human intervention.

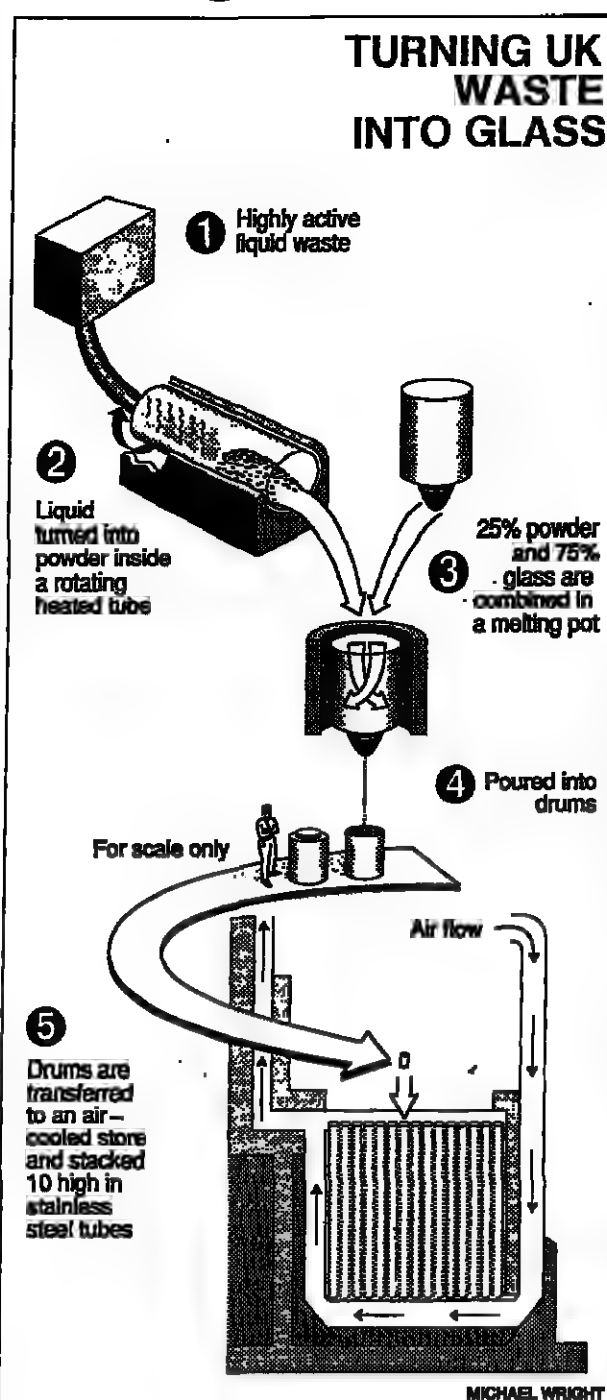
The plant is already converting wastes that have been stored as liquids for 40 years into solid glass blocks the size of a traditional milk churn. The plant is based on French technology, but with improvements that make it far safer. At Sellafield, the solidified wastes require no cooling fans to prevent them from overheating, as they do in the French plants. In theory, once they are in place in the product store, they can be left without being touched for the hundreds of years they need before their radioactive contents become harmless.

Until now, dangerous wastes left after spent nuclear fuel has been reprocessed at Sellafield have been stored as liquids in double-walled stainless steel tanks surrounded by concrete. Because of the heat caused by radioactive decay, the tanks must be cooled.

The tanks are safe, but only if they can be continuously watched for possibly thousands of years to ensure that there are no leaks. Environmentalists argue that no society can be sure of surviving long enough to see that the wastes become safe.

Turning the wastes into solids that cannot leak and require no cooling except by natural air flow is seen as the answer. Ultimately, the solidified waste may be stored underground, but for the immediate future the containers will be stacked ten deep in vertical channels in the storage plant. The waste from foreign fuel reprocessed at Sellafield will be shipped back to the countries of origin.

In the Sellafield process the



liquid wastes are piped into a slowly rotating furnace. The liquids are mixed with chemicals, including ordinary sugar, heated to 850°C, and converted to a powder resembling instant coffee but carrying radiation levels so high that direct exposure would cause death in seconds. The powder is mixed with glass flakes and heated in a furnace to about 1,150°C.

NIGEL HAWKES

Ingredients included in fertilisers, beer, paint or plastics could be used in a chemical weapons factory.

Pearce Wright reports

The sixth house on 33rd Street, in the Karada section of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, has become infamous. It operated under the guise of the registered office of the Iraqi State Enterprise for Pesticide Production, where, in collusion with German and other European and American companies, multi-million-dollar contracts were negotiated for equipment and raw materials to make chemical weapons, including mustard gas and the nerve gases tabun and sarin, at a huge factory at Samarra, north of Baghdad.

President Saddam Hussein practised a deception that made one of the nightmares of disarmament specialists come true. He showed the ease with which work on chemical munitions could be masked as commercial activities and cheap, globally available industrial chemicals diverted for weapons production.

The predicament presents the greatest challenge to the latest negotiations at the Geneva disarmament conference. The meeting has six months to put some bite into two long-standing agreements — one outlawing chemical warfare, adopted in 1925, and the other, in 1972, banning biological warfare. The goal is to forge a new pact with provisions to enforce the bans.

After the 1.3 million gas casualties of the first world war, the treaty banning chemical weapons was adopted by 29 nations and signed subsequently by 100 others, including Iraq. The ban specified only the use of weapons, but most of the powerful nations in the chemical treaty negotiations, such as the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, China and France, viewed the arrangements as a no-first-use agreement, giving victims the right to retaliate in kind.

Consequently, for 65 years, research has continued into the science and development of chemical weapons. Britain alone formally abandoned the production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons between countries 20 years ago. Nevertheless, research into the latest developments continues and infor-



Into the unknown: allied soldiers wearing gas masks and protective clothing against a possible chemical attack

mation is exchanged with the US. In those two decades the number of nations suspected of having the ability to make chemical weapons has risen from five to 22, and, although Iraq is a signatory to the treaty, Saddam has had no reservations in using them.

Iraq launched mustard gas at opposing troops in the war with Iran and against civilians in Kurdistan. Saddam's notoriety increased when he became the first belligerent in the world to use nerve gas, in a bombardment of helpless civilian Kurdish populations at Halabja and Dujaila.

Unfortunately for negotiators in disarmament talks, the ready commercial availability of most of the ingredients of chemical weapons, which are also cheap and easy to produce, make controlling arms proliferation difficult. Thus, it is much harder to devise an effective chemical disarmament convention that can be verified than a nuclear arms convention, according to Nicholas Sims, a specialist in the treaty negotiations.

Mr Sims, of the London School of Economics and Political Science, told a recent meeting of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, that he believed a successful chemical convention was needed to achieve a nuclear one.

Most of the important compounds the chemical weapons negotiators are trying to control come under the heading of dual-use substances because they have both commercial and military applications. Hence, in principle, any pharmaceutical or fertiliser factory, any brewery, or any paint or plastics works is potentially a chemical weapons plant, according to General Howard Eggleston, head of the American army's space and special weapons directorate.

So the most beneficial industrial chemicals can become the most pernicious in a tyrant's hands. An example is thiodiglycol, an agent that is one step away from mustard gas and causes most of its deaths when it destroys the lungs.

Yet, as a perfectly ethical advertisement for thiodiglycol in an international trade magazine shows, it has thoroughly worthwhile applications in the printing and textile trades and a vast range of other industries that need high-quality electroplating.

The shopping list of bulk industrial chemicals with a potential for sinister use includes cyanide, which may be turned directly into a gas that kills by swamping the oxygen in the blood of the victim, or suffocating gases made from general industrial substances such as chlorine and phosgene.

Adossier, prepared for British doctors who treated victims from Iraqi Kurdistan and who would care for casualties from the Gulf, calculates that German chemical plant supplied to Iraq could produce up to 40 tons of mustard gas a month and four tons each of the nerve gases sarin and tabun.

Almost understating the nightmare, Carl Magnus Hyttenius, the disarmament conference's outgoing president, says the Gulf war illustrates the urgency and need for an additional convention halting production, removing stockpiles and incorporating a compulsory inspection procedure to stop cheating.

The latest talks have been helped by an informal forum known as the Australia group, which meets in Paris twice a year, to harmonise national export controls over chemicals that could aid the proliferation of weapons. Delegates from 26 countries have agreed on a strict monitoring system of the production or use of 50 key chemicals with the potential for weapons development.

Meanwhile, the British government has tested a scheme of inspection on request, drawn up with the chemical industry's co-operation, to verify that there is no cheating at commercial plants, military sites and government establishments.

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Angus

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SANDOZ

CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Self-regarding tale of bravery

Dances With Wolves, December Bride, Short Time, 3 Men and a Little Lady, Staying Together and DuckTales: The Movie are reviewed by Geoff Brown

Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* (12, Warner West End, Cannon Shaftesbury Avenue) is a film that means to be noticed. It takes three hours; it resurrects the Western landscapes, if not the myths, with dotting love. The narrative proceeds with an epic sweep, to provide extra dignity, Sioux Indians speak their native tongue, necessitating subtitles. Meanwhile, as the Union soldier drawn into Sioux culture at his far-flung frontier post, Costner, the star-director, preens before the camera, defying us not to love him. You can almost hear the film screaming: "I am worthy! I am brave! I deserve at least four Oscars!"

The boastful solemnity of *Dances With Wolves* is not all hollow. Costner mounts his directorial debut with images to moisten the eyes of Western buffs pining for the old days. A line of Indians massed against the horizon buffalo thundering, a man and his horse on a windswept plain; crags set off against a blistering blue sky. Costner ransacks the Hollywood Western storehouse with taste and eloquence. He amazes, too, one grandiose cut jolts us from a skeleton close-up on the westward trail to the firmament's stars.

Yet the epic sweep becomes something of a burden when the story swept over proves so small and simple. A small-scale could hold it. His frontier post is a deserted ruin, sensitive Lieutenant Dunbar finds company with the noble Sioux. After tentative beginnings, they become fast friends. Dunbar takes a Sioux bride, a Sioux name, and joins in the daily round—fighting off Pawnees, following buffalo, nurturing a society in harmony with nature. We wait a painful age for the army's return to get their man; when they do, they behave like blood-thirsty dogs.

In place of complex characters, Costner and his screenwriter, Michael Blake, parade puppets clothed in a blanket of authenticity. The Lakota language trips off the tongue of the cast's Native Americans; the costumes, too, bear the mark of rigorous research. Yet the blanket contains gaping holes. John Barry's music, lacking all but the most synthetic American flavour, constantly lets the images down while Costner's expressions offer such contemporary angst rather than the solitary soldier of the 1860s. This *Civil War* lieutenant is a fervent Green, speaking up for Indian culture and the shrinking frontier. He salutes the Sioux with a friendly "Hi!", at least they're never advised to have a nice day. No huge flaws, these, though they do contribute to the film's whiff of the bogus.

Costner's performance is admirable: sometimes too much so, for as in many first films by actor-

This Civil War lieutenant is a fervent Green. He salutes the Sioux with a friendly "Hi!"; at least they are never advised to have a nice day

appeared at last year's Cannes festival, where it won some friends. O'Sullivan, an accomplished cameraman who previously directed the short film *The Woman Who Married Clark Gable*, certainly ensures craftsmanship galore. But there is something missing: passion, humour, the thrust of drama. The story, derived from Sam Hanna Bell's novel, is simple. Sarah, a farmhouse servant brought up according to strict Presbyterian principles, breaks off old habits and forms sexual relations with both her strapping masters. She gives birth, but risks the community's condemnation by refusing to marry either party. The climax finally comes in a peremptory coda, 15 years after the main action.

The script is by playwright David Rudkin, chosen because he seemed

likely to avoid what the director called "a television-type drama with pretty landscapes, mushy music, and other twiddly bits". Rudkin may steer clear of silly rural chitchat, though his pregnant words and pauses open up fissures which the camera cannot fill. It is largely left to Saskia Reeves, a film newcomer with haunting eyes, to give the story what punch it possesses: her vibrant performance as the strong-willed Sarah lingers long after the rain, mud and help have vanished.

Short Time (12, Odeon Haymarket) returns us with a bump to one of Hollywood's basics: the car chase. Pursuing his prey like a man possessed, Dwayne Coleman—a timid Seattle cop, days away from retirement—reduces his vehicle to a gauged, upturned heap. Midway through the fury, he removes his seat-belt: the cop, mistakenly expecting imminent death from the rare blood disease, Wechsler's Curse, is struggling to get killed on the job, so that his estranged family can enjoy the life insurance.

Outside its car chase, *Short Time* treads on tricky ground, shifting uneasily between black farce and tender sentiment. Intimate scenes between Coleman and Teri Garr, his ex-wife, are too glibly written for the tears to flow; the film scores better hits with Coleman and Matt Frewer (the cop's oddball partner). The director is Gregg Champion, a former stunt specialist and the eldest son of Marge and Gower Champion, dancing dainties of 1950s musicals.

We expect sequels to be worse than the originals, though *3 Men and a Little Lady* (PG, Odeon Leicester Square) plunges far below acceptable limits. This is a comedy with scarcely one joke to its name. Things are bad enough in the early stages, when the script alternates between coy sermons on family life and desperate bids for the audience's affections, like the bachelor trio's rap lullaby to their perky five-year-old girl. But once the little lady's actress mother takes her to England to pursue married life with a caddish director at the National Theatre, the film nosedives into abject disaster.

Eccentric rural vicars and family reminders and country lanes choked with flocks of sheep stopped being funny more than 30 years ago. Yet writer Charlie Peters and director Emilio Ardolino (who brought you *Daddy's Darling*) pile up every archaic comedy wheeze in the book. Nancy Travis, the toff's mother (a minor character in the first film), smiles incessantly. Ted Danson cowers; Steve Guttenberg grins; Tom Selleck drives a Mini. They need not have bothered.

Staying Together (15, Cannon Pantons Street), directed by Lee Grant in 1989, offers a furious gallop through the stock situations of small-town American melo-



Pressing? Kevin Costner directed himself in *Dances With Wolves*

drama: boisterous boys growing to manhood, dad's demise, mother's rebirth. As in his script for *Memphis Belle*, Monte Merrick creates more characters than he knows what to do with: only 17-year-old Sean Astin cuts through the jumble as the family rascal with a pious grin. Finally, *DuckTales: The Movie*, subtitled *Treasure of the Lost Lamp* (U, general release), based on a Disney television show. The script,

BRIEFING

Ominously high

When Wilhelmina Fernandez comes to the Old Vic to star in *Carmen Jones* in April, she will not only be bringing a talent honed in the opera houses of America, *Benedict Nightingale* reports. She will be introducing New York ticket prices, too. For the first time in London, a £1 seat at a musical will cost £29.50.

True, there are reasons why Oscar Hammerstein II's updating of Bizet should be expensive: the show comes with interchangeable pairs of principals. True, £29.50 might not seem offputting to somebody mortgaging his grandmother to buy a Covent Garden ticket. But the price is part of an inexorable trend upwards. *Cats*, *Into the Woods*, *Les Misérables* and *Aspects of Love* all have a top price of £25.

No longer can British travel agents boast that theatre tickets cost half their New York counterparts. There, a prime seat for *Les Misérables* costs \$60 (£30). Americans say that the main reason for Broadway's decline is that a couple wishing to hire a babysitter, park, eat, and see a show may end up paying \$300 (£150). The same may be becoming true for London.

Straight plays are cheaper, but not much less so than in New York. The top West End price is now £17 or £18, compared with £21 on Broadway. The National charges up to £16 for a seat in the Olivier or Lyttelton, the RSC £18.50 at the Barbican and much more at its Stratford headquarters. Depending on the date of his visit, a spectator



Wilhelmina Fernandez: coming in to the Old Vic

Grand entrance

THE Festival Hall's main foyer is to get a £550,000 facelift—courtesy of its new caterers. The South Bank Centre told bidders for the catering contract that it hoped the refurbishment, National Leisure Catering won the contract, but the Centre was only awarded a 5.5 per cent subsidy increase. Now that the caterer is paying, the decorators should be finished by the summer.

Amazing activity

SUDDENLY, everybody is noticing Steven Pimlott, who will direct a new production of that now venerable biblical musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Rice and Lloyd Webber are writing new songs for the revival (their first collaboration for some years), and Jason Donovan, Australian idol of the toddler classes, has been secured for the title role. Pimlott is also to direct at both the RSC (*Julius Caesar*) and National (*Molière's The Miser*) and is planning the American transfer of his 1989 *Earls Court Carmen*.

Last chance...

WITH her three-octave range and imperiousness of jazz diva, the New York singer Ann Hampton Callaway has been enjoying a successful run at London's Pizza on the Park (071-235 5273). Her extended residency comes to an end on Saturday. Hampton Callaway is playing early sets only, with mouth-organist Larry Adler appearing later.

DANCE

Dream return to centre-stage

Not so long ago, Sir Kenneth MacMillan was persona non grata at the Royal Opera House, his works overlooked by the management as companies abroad rushed to collect them. Today, it seems the Royal Ballet cannot get enough of Britain's foremost classical choreographer. Already this season, two of his full-length ballets—*Manon* and *The Prince of the Pagodas*—have been featured; tonight a triple bill will bring together his first and latest works in a showcase, enabling Covent Garden audiences to savor the full length of his career.

The regeneration of MacMillan began more than a year ago, prompted by his sixtieth birthday in December 1989. As if suddenly aware that it had a family treasure in the attic, the Royal Ballet reversed years of neglect by dusting off some of the MacMillan canon (*Gloria*, *My Brother, My Sisters*, *Requiem and Song of the Earth*) in its repertoire and feigning its principal choreographer in a season-long celebration which featured the premiere of *The Prince of the Pagodas*.

With this season confirming the reversal in his fortunes, MacMillan is delighted to be back in favour. "Heavens, I thought last year was my year because they did so many of my ballets. Still, maybe it's my two years. I think it's wonderful. The opera house has been very generous. It's funny, you get to be 60 and somehow some of the barriers get let down. Everyone is more kindly disposed to one when one is 60."

Tonight's premiere of the MacMillan double-bill (part of a mixed programme including *Raymond Act III*) pairs the abstract with the narrative; his 1955 professional bow with Sadler's Wells Theatre

The Royal Ballet's chief choreographer is at last receiving the recognition that his talent merits, argues Debra Craine



Typically steamy MacMillan: Viviana Durante and Bruce Sansom in the current production of *Manon*

Ballet, *Dances concertantes*, a pure dance work of angular, asymmetric movements inspired by the rhythms of Stravinsky's astringent score, and his 1991 *Winter Dreams*, a one-act dramatic ballet based on Chekhov's play, *Three Sisters*.

According to Monica Mason, the Royal Ballet's assistant director, "everything about *Dances* is sharp and staccato, whereas *Winter Dreams* is lyrical and romantic, in a sense much more classical... The two works could not be more different and yet there are touches of Kenneth's hallmarks—the way through." Both ballets use the difficult footwork, the articulated torso, the quick changes of direction and

lovers, created last summer for Dorey Russell and ex-Bolshoi star Irek Mukhamedov. Encouraged by its immediate success, the choreographer decided to use it as the focus of a larger work based on Chekhov's story and Tchaikovsky's piano music. "It's not a translation of *Three Sisters* into movement," says MacMillan. "I'm not attempting to do the whole play, I'm really trying to evoke its atmosphere. Because it's called *Winter Dreams* I hope it will have a dream-like quality."

"I think Kenneth has done a really clever thing by managing to put the whole story across in just 40 minutes and yet make people understand exactly what is going on," says principal dancer Viviana Durante, who has created the role of youngest sister Irina in *Winter Dreams*, as well as taking the leading female role in *Dances*.

For dramatic ballerinas such as Durante, MacMillan is a godsend, stripping classical ballet of its rigorous formalism and giving naturalism a free rein. "I love the way he portrays certain feelings with music," says Durante. "There is a lot of drama and emotion behind it. His ballets are easy to dance because they feel very natural even though all of them are technically very difficult."

While the tadoring popularity of MacMillan's sexually charged ballets such as *Manon* and *Romeo and Juliet* will ensure his place in the repertoire, the critical debate over his artistic genius will continue to rage. His unorthodoxy and eagerness to experiment have led to risks, and some of them—such as *Isadora*—have been undoubted failures.

But, says Monica Mason, "Kenneth is the greatest choreographer in the world today. I don't think I've ever seen him make a ballet where he hasn't got to the heart of something and had something new and different to say. Even if the ballet in the end wasn't a total success, the brilliant dance invention was always there."

Dances concertantes and *Winter Dreams* open tonight at the Royal Opera House, Bow Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 (071-240 1066) at 7.30pm

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More polish than passion

Eric Clapton
Albert Hall

ERIC Clapton inaugurated the idea of a new year's residency at this most august of London venues in January 1987 when he played a relatively modest run of six shows. He extended the stretch to nine nights in 1988, 12 nights in 1989 and 18 nights in 1990, which was when he started to make airy pronouncements to the effect that he liked to consider these annual events to be rock's equivalent to the Proms.

Concededly, but it was no idle boast, and this year's 24-night programme is his most ambitious yet. As the weeks go by there will be nightly pilgrimages to see one of rock's most senior citizens leading an all-star blues revue, an orchestral extravaganza, and backing bands of various sizes and permutations.

But on Tuesday night he opened the season modestly enough with a group comprised of just Nathan East (bass), Greg Phillinganes (keyboards) and Phil Collins (drums). As they eased into a selection of material from Clapton's 1989 album *Journeyman*—"Pretending", "No Alibis", "Running on Faith"—the four musicians fell into a measured gait that was comfortably familiar.

Indeed with no new material whatsoever, the whole performance turned out to be a virtual rerun of last year's show, which was what most of those who had bought tickets—from the captains of industry in the boxes, to their

children in the stalls—had clearly been hoping to hear.

Even the sartorial details remained unaltered, with Clapton sporting the same black baggy suit, the same luxuriant floppy bouffant, the same precisely cultivated designer stubble, and the same black Stratocaster that he has done, more or less, since Live Aid.

"I Shot the Sheriff" found Collins on sprightly form before the band plunged into the majestic opening chords of "White Room", the first of several Cream favourites which peppered the set. Clapton gave the vocal a much more soulful twist than that of the original and loosed off a banshee wail of a solo that was one of the high points of the evening.

Although generally a polished performance from a crack team of professionals, the moments to treasure were few and far between. Clapton is not a performer much given to histrionics anyway, and here he had the air of a man pacing himself for the long haul ahead.

"Before You Accuse Me" was a vehicle for some fairly standard blues licks, while "Badage", "Cocaine" and "Layla" were trotted out like the old standbys they are, albeit to Pavlovian displays of ecstasy among the crowd.

There were flashes of passion, notably during the slow-burning, soul-tinged "Old Love", where Clapton slipped several out-of-context blues quotes into an untypically squawky solo. But it was a show that was far too predictable to stretch players of this calibre. For that we must await developments as the residency continues.

DAVID SINCLAIR



Predictable polish: Clapton at the Albert Hall on Tuesday

The Pilgrim
Lilian Baylis

THE Portuguese themselves would probably admit that their nation has as much claim to be considered a centre of European drama as Britain to be the hub of the grape-trampling industry. It would be foolish, then, to expect Almeida Garrett's play, the acknowledged masterpiece of his country's theatre, to be a southerly *Hamlet* which has eluded English discovery.

Garrett wrote *The Pilgrim* in 1843 but set it two centuries

earlier, soon after one of the more traumatic events in Portuguese history. His characters are still reeling at the death of their Arthurian boy-king, Sebastian, and the Spanish invasion that followed. Dom Manuel de Coutinho, one of the few patriotic holdouts, torches his ancestral pile rather than let the quillings borrow it.

For the first half, the main dramatic question seems to be whether he and his family will suffer for his choice; and rather laboriously posed it is. But then a strange new character enters, and proceeds to substitute adrenalin for the anaesthetic in the play's veins. He is the Pilgrim, in Terry Taplin's performance a dishevelled hulk with yellow

jowls, pinky-grey carbuncles, and a voice like John Cleese's hoarse *Death in the Meaning of Life*.

For these Portuguese nobles, the Pilgrim's news is almost as fatal. He reports that David Gwillim's dashing Manuel is a bigamist. His wife's first husband, thought to have died in battle, has not merely survived but has somehow contrived to spend the past 20 years as a hermit in Jerusalem.

That something of the sort supposedly happened to the real Coutinho clan around 1602 does not make this twist of the plot less abrupt or preposterous. A play about political heroics suddenly involves a juicy social scandal, but one that so sharply raises the temperature of Robin Midgley's

touring production it is hard to complain. Suddenly all is sombre *Angst*, principled despair. Gwillim's Manuel decides to become a monk, and Valerie Braddell, his distraught wife, to take the veil. Their daughter, Emma D'Inverno's Maria, tactfully expires.

Garrett makes it clear that there are ways to elude disaster, but that his people are too high-minded to take them. For these overweening Iberian super-egos, death is vastly to be preferred to dishonour, the necessary to the least compromise. It is admirable, most admirable, but likely to leave a pragmatic English audience a bit cold. Oh, for an hour of Falstaff.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

The Playboy of the Western World
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds

ANYBODY who has ever read or seen Synge's *Riders to the Sea* or most sports of all, heard it set to the music of Vaughan Williams, will know it to be a perfectly 'ridiculous piece of writing. So it is a great thing to have the chance to see his *Playboy* and relish the marvellously decorated diction of his Mayo peasants working within a plot of comic, not to say mythic, perfection.

Time has been good to this play. Synge may have written it to mock, if with affection, the credulous peasantry of the wild western counties, but the inn and out of his distaste of fierce Gaelic nationalism are of no relevance to the play's achievement. Nationalists denounced the *Playboy*. Theatre's first production in 1907 as a libel on the Irish people. I do not suppose anyone would think along those lines today. The character of young Christy Mahon, on the run because he believes he has killed his father, has long since become a man for all ages.

For Pegeen Mike's wayside shebeen the ground plan is a wide diamond. Unearthed spuds lie

scattered below the front two sides, while the thick rear walls rise up to a canopy, patchworked like an aerial view of Irish fields. Across these, at the start, the shadows of clouds go scudding.

This is the arena for Christy's elevation from timid youth to flourishing manhood. Reece Dinsdale plays him with winning charm, ebullient, bizarrely tearful and, when his furious dad arrives, cowering behind the door like a scarecrow bereft of straw. The village men have cheered his daring, the girls competed to feed him tasty morsels, and Pegeen has fallen, tragically, in love.

The near-grotesque mix of comedy and killing is a challenge to a director, and there are moments in Jude Kelly's production when the audience is uncertain how to respond. Such doubts are the true mark of the grotesque: Kelly is right not to blur these, but to enclose them within the swirling, vivid realism of her staging.

With Christy out of the room, the girls find themselves on his straw bed; and though this makes the survival of the eggs in Sara's pocket a miracle in itself, the impish ecstasy of the girls is one of many beautifully true moments.

The ensemble playing is faultless and Niamh Cusack gives Pegeen's final speech the timbre of a terrible grief for a playboy and happiness lost.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Flying Ashes
ICA

THE Siberian conditions currently obtaining in London may bring us a degree or two closer to the gales (sound effects of howling wind gale resonance), but in other respects the experiences of women political prisoners in the Soviet Union are as remote from us as, say, those of Iraqi soldiers being bombed by B52s. The basis of this play or spectacle by Tony Crazie is the collection *Letters of Love* by Julia Voznesenskaya; some of these were written (from prison camps, in the 1980s) by poets, but the emphasis of Sarah Le Brocq's realisation is visual. The words, broken into fragments, together with Mark Dwyer's soundtrack which mixes jazz piano and baroque flute, act as background to emotions presented physically.

Andrew Williamson's staggered set, with a blue wall at the back and a cross between a gallows and a constructivist sculpture in the middle, allows ample space in which to show the isolation of the three women, Irina, Tanya and Lazierina. All wear grey smocks and headscarves but elements of character are sharply differentiated by Amanda Todd (sensual, wide eyed), Candy Bierman (dreamy) and Jane Hampson

(aggressive, sarcastic, defiantly defiant). Paul Moroney has the thankless role of a token man, lover to Irina, knife-flicking rapist to Lazierina.

The purpose is certainly not to impart information about the sufferings of women in the gulag; I would have welcomed more specificity about time, place and individuals — and whether these things are still happening. Horrors, in the form of beatings, torture and rape, are suggested but the emphasis is on feelings of loss of love and yearning for love.

There is an affecting sequence of moments of separation, and a game of erotic hide and seek with a movable grille which turns into a prison fence. Every now and then one of the scattered, torn-up phrases which litter the production falls into place: "I cannot speak, ever".

There are also moments of celebration: a dry tap suddenly spouts water, and hair washing becomes a sublime, orgasmic release. "The problem of a piece of soap concerns me infinitely more than the problem of peace and socialism" one of the women admits with shining honesty. In the context of a production which doubts the durability of language, this statement carries more weight than such high-flown formulations as "love will survive, we must love, we must survive".

HARRY EYRES

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 30

COFFERING

(b) Decorating a ceiling with snail square or polygonal ornamental panels, from the Greek *kyphos* a heaver. "Coffering" was intended by Wren, as shown by his drawings.

BRESSUMER

(a) A beam is a timber-framed building to support the, usually projecting, superstructure, a variant of breast-summer, from the French *ressumer* a beam. "The bressumer is a beam supporting the front of a building, after the manner of a titel."

TOURLEUSE

(b) A turret corbelled out from the wall, the diminutive form of the French *tour* a tower; Sir Walter Scott: "in the little summit tourelle at Earlsburg."

CRUCK

(a) A big curved beam supporting both walls and roof of a cottage, variant of cruck: "In the development of the cruck framework, the cruck buildings of Northern England played an important role."

ENTERTAINMENTS

THEATRES

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WINNING MOVIES

By Raymond Keen

Chess Correspondent

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6.00 **Coast**
6.30 BBC Breakfast News with Nicholas Witchell and Louise Meyer
9.15 **Kilroy**. Robert Kilroy-Silk, chairs a studio discussion on a topical subject 0.55 Regional News and weather
10.00 News and weather 10.05 Playdays from Wednesday, Wolverhampton 10.30 Dish of the Day from Rosemary Moon 10.40 Brainwaves. Andy Craig hosts the quiz show from Liverpool
11.00 News, regional news and weather 11.05 People Today with Adrian Mills and David Jones
12.00 News, regional news and weather 12.05 Rosemary Conley's Diet and Fitness Club. Exercises to help get into shape 12.20 Scene Today. The daily entertainment show, live from Pebble Mill with a blend of music, conversation and special features
1.00 Nine O'Clock News with Michael Buerk. Weather
1.30 Neighbours. (Contest) 1.50 Going for Gold. European quiz with Henry Kelly as questionmaster
2.15 Snooker. Action from the first quarter-final of the Benson and Hedges Masters. Introduced by Tony Gubina from the Wembley Conference Centre
3.50 Children's BBC begins with Dooby's Duck Trick 3.55 Gordon the Gopher with Philip Schofield 4.05 Jackanory. Jane Asher with part four of *The Princess and the Goblin*, by George MacDonald 4.20 Fantastic Miss. Animated adventures of a bionic baby (y) 4.30 Billy Webb's Amazing Story. The final episode of the children's drama series
4.55 Newsworld 6.05 Blue Planet presented by Yvette Fielding, John Leslie and Diane Louise Jordan
5.35 Neighbours (y). (Contest) Northern Ireland: Sportswide 5.40 Inside Ulster
6.00 Six O'Clock News with Anna Ford and Andrew Harvey. Weather 6.30 Regional News Magazines. Northern Ireland: Neighbours
7.00 Top of the Pops presented by Bruno Brookes (simultaneous broadcast with Radio 1)
7.30 EastEnders. Early London soap. (Contest)
8.00 Tomorrow's World. Judith Hann, Howard Stablesford, Peter MacCann and Kate Bellingham present the science programme which gives high-tech gimmicks and news about the shape of things to come. Includes news of a revolutionary tagging system for the blind which is tested out on the streets of Warwick, and from Hong Kong details of new equipment to help scientists identify when and where typhoons will strike
8.30 The Brittas Empire. Chris Barrie as the obnoxious leisure centre manager who has much intelligence as poor old Frank Spencer. In this episode he is forced to close the centre down when he investigates a suspected case of pilfering by staff. (Contest) Northern Ireland: Spotlight
9.00 Nine O'Clock News with Michael Buerk. (Contest) Regional news and weather
9.30 Open All Hours. Whimsical comic shop comedy from Roy Clarke that sometimes relies too heavily on Ronnie Barker's stut. This week the miserly Awdry attends the funeral of a friend, taking with him a wreath the size of a bathtub. With David Jason as the gormless Granville, his nephew and assistant (y). Northern Ireland: The Corner House



Discussion: MP's Norman Tibbitt and Sir David Steel (10.00am)

10.00 Question Time. Live discussion before a studio audience, chaired by Peter Sissons. Tonight's panel includes MP's Norman Tibbitt, Sir David Steel and Tony Benn
11.00 Snooker. Tony Gubina introduces highlights from a quarter-final of the Benson and Hedges Masters from the Wembley Conference Centre. The commentators are Ted Lowe, Jack Kargner and Clive Everton with summaries by John Spencer and Ray Edmunds
12.15am **Gulf News**
12.25 **Weather**

8.00 **News 8.15** **Weather**
9.00 **Daytime on Two**. For teachers - assessment at key stage 1 9.30 Maths: boxes 9.45 From magazine for beginners 10.00 Young people's magazine 10.15 Career ideas 10.35 A child's guide to adults 11.00 Living in today's Luxor 11.20 What the Euro-tunnels learnt from the Brunel 11.40 Maths 12.05 Four artists illustrate how they use their imagination 12.25 Life in a Georgian mountain village 12.50 Language in the national curriculum 1.20 Charlie Cheek 1.40 A musical fantasy journey through the universe
2.00 News and weather followed by You and Me (y) 2.15 Antiques Roadshow from St Ives, Cambridgeshire (y). (Contest)
3.00 News and weather followed by Westminster Live 3.50 News, regional news and weather
4.00 Snooker. Further quarter-final action from the Benson and Hedges Masters at the Wembley Conference Centre
5.00 News headlines followed by One In Four. Magazine series on disabled matters. This week includes a look at the life of Beverly Lewis, a deaf-blind woman from Gloucester who died two years ago this month
5.30 Clean State. With Jackie Sprockley looking at the state of British employment training
6.00 Film: Don't Lose Your Head (1986). Sidney James, Kenneth Williams and Jim Dale head the cast of a Carry On-type comedy set during the French Revolution. Directed by Gerald Thomas. (Contest)
7.35 **Animation Now**. More cartoon antics
7.35 **First Sight**. Going... Going... With a report on the thriving criminal activity in the art world and an insight into methods employed by art thieves. Northern Ireland: The Brittas Empire; England: Midlands - the Midlands Report; Leeds, Newcastle and Manchester: Close-up North; Gloucestershire: Southern Eye; Plymouth: Western Approach; Bristol: Current Account
8.05 **Black House**. Episode six of the masterly eight-part dramatisation of the classic Dickens novel (y). (Contest)
9.00 **The Mary Whitehouse Experience**. Small screen version of the cult radio comedy.

9.30 **40 Minutes**. The hour. **CHOICE**: Departing from its usual essays on the tensions and eccentricities of British life, 40 Minutes presents a wordless film from Poland. The subject is Jurk Orlewski, who had both arms amputated after a childhood accident and spent many years in prison before finding a new direction as an artist. The film ranges over episodes from Orlewski's life with the subject playing himself in a reconstruction of his prison experiences and subsequent taste of freedom. The treatment is highly stylised, with both sound and image being sharpened for effect. At times the lighting and compositions are too contrived and form threatens to swamp content. But this extended approach cannot extinguish the human being at the centre of the film, a Chaplinesque figure as he flirts with a circus girl but more often seen as a loner, set apart from society and struggling painfully to draw with his mouth. (Contest)



Compensating for his lack of arms: Jurk Orlewski (9.30pm)

10.10 **Small Objects of Desire: The Light Bulb**. **CHOICE**: The story of the electric light bulb gets the inventive treatment typical of this series, with the commentator Peter O'Sullivan describing the "race" among inventors and appearances from Bob Dylan, former president Cascazo and Count Dracula. More expected figures include Thomas Edison, victim of a Monty Python-style animation, and there is a full mining of old promotional time with the edited dialogue and punny accounts. But among the jokes and the sometimes bewildering visuals are solid nuggets of social and industrial history. The early bulb cost the same as a day's pay for a policeman. But as mass production brought the price down, it became a popular consumer item, bought in bulk and thrown away afterwards. Surprisingly, perhaps, the average bulb lasts no longer than 11,000 hours, less than 1980, although it has seen off the more cost-effective fluorescent tube. (Contest)
10.30 **Newswatch** with Jeremy Paxman
11.20 **The Late Show**. Arts and media magazine
12.00 **Weather**
12.05 **Weekend Outlook**. A preview of programmes from the Open University on Saturday and Sunday. Ends at 12.15.

5.00 **TV-am**
5.25 **ITN Gulf News Report**. Latest news and developments from the war zone 9.55 Thames News and weather
10.00 **The Time**... The Place... Anna Soubry chairs a discussion on a topical subject
10.40 **This Morning**. Family magazine programme
12.05 **The Riddlers** 12.25 Thames News and weather
12.30 **News** and weather
1.20 **Home And Away**. Drama serial about an Australian couple and their foster children 1.50 A Country Practice. Australian soap set around a rural community health centre
2.20 **TV Weekly**. A look behind the scenes of ITV's favourite programmes, plus Barry Took with a selection of golden television moments 2.50 Give Us A Clue. Celebrity charades hosted by Michael Parkinson with regular captain Lionel Blair and Lisa Golder. This afternoon they are joined by Nino Fritto, Vicki Michelle, Hilary O'Neill, Tony Statler, Paula Wilcox and Bernie Wintson
3.15 **Gulf News Report** 3.20 Thames News headlines 3.25 The Young Doctors. Australian drama set in a large city hospital
4.00 **Om TV**. Children's natural history programme presented by Michaela Strachan. Includes a look at some creepy-crawlies, a visit to a zoo in Perth and a trip to a camel market (postponed from January 31). 4.20 Warner Brothers Cartoon 4.30 Spatz. Children's comedy drama serial set in a fast food restaurant
5.00 **Home And Away** (y)
5.25 **Thames Help**. Jackie Sprockley with news of the work of Athlone House, a long stay hospital on the Highgate/Hampstead border
5.30 **News** (Oracle) and weather
6.00 **Blackbustlers**. Teenage quiz hosted by Bob Halnees
6.30 **Thames News** and weather

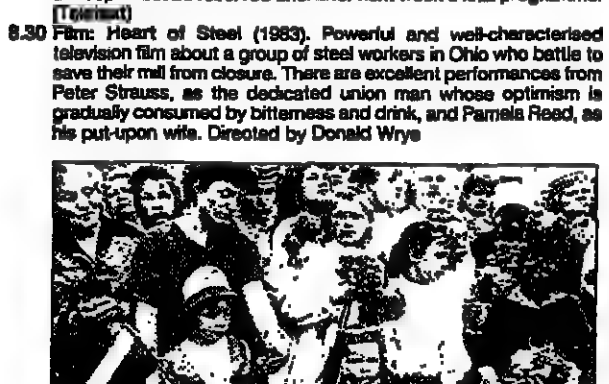


The recipient of unwelcome news: Claire King (7.00pm)

7.00 **Emmerdale**. Dolly (Jean Rogers) tells Kim (Claire King) she is pregnant, but Kim is disappointed to have a child because she is confined to learn Dolly intends to have an abortion. (Oracle)
7.30 **Jimmy's**. Real-life medical dramas from St James's Hospital in Leeds. Today the focus is on doctors preparing to take the exams of the Royal College of Surgeons
8.00 **Gulf News Report**
8.05 **The Bill**. Night and Day. Another pile of trouble for the Sun Hill force in the consistently strong police series. (Oracle)
8.35 **This Week**. An examination of the effect of BSE featuring an interview with a former Vietnam fighter who experienced bombardments during the Vietnam war
9.00 **Piccadilly**. George Cole and Dennis Watman in another vintage holiday of double crossing and dodgy deals. Small time crook Maltese Tony finds himself in a jam when he returns to England and calls on Arthur and Terry to help him deliver £20,000. The task would be reasonably simple if the notorious Billy Lynch were not hot on Tony's heels (y). (Oracle)
10.00 **News at Ten** (Oracle) and weather 10.45 Thames News. and weather
10.55 **The City Programme**
11.25 **01**. Adrian Edmondson reviews the film *Three Men and a Little Lady*, with Tom Selleck, Ted Danson and Steve Guttenberg. Theatre reviews include *The King and I* and the English Shakespeare Company's *Volpone*
11.55 **Gulf News Report**
12.00 **Piccadilly**. Carl Block H. Australian drama set in a woman's detention centre, where everyone involved with the making of the programme should be locked up
12.50 **Contacts**. A new series of the television contact magazine, allowing viewers to strike up new relationships via the small screen
1.20 **World Chess**. The match between Spelman and Short, analysed by Raymond Keene, chess correspondent of *The Times*
1.40 **Film: The Incredible Shrinking Woman** (1981) starring Lily Tomlin and Charles Grodin. Comedy about a suburban housewife whose constant exposure to household products causes her to reduce in size. Directed by Joel Schumacher
3.20 **Herdall**. Routine American cop drama about two unorthodox police partners who have lots of scapes and jokes. Starring John Ashton and Richard Tyson
4.30 **America's Top Ten** (y)
5.00 **ITN Morning News**. Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

6.00 **The Channel Four Daily**. Includes extended coverage of the war in the Gulf
9.25 **Schools**
12.00 **Channel 4 News Summary**. The latest from the Gulf
12.05 **The Parliament Programme** presented by Sue Cameron
12.30 **Business Daily**. Financial and business news service
1.00 **Sesame Street**. Children's learning programme
2.00 **That's Entertaining**. Have You Heard the One about the Elephant? Continuing the sense in which Richard Cawley demonstrates the secrets of successful dinner parties despite limited time or budget (y). (Teletext)
2.30 **Cutting Edge: Sanctuary**. A documentary about the world's first refuge for battered wives set up in Chiswick, London, 20 years ago. It catches up with the founder, Erin Pizzey, who is now living on a Caribbean island (y). (Teletext)
3.30 **Land of Hope: The Breeding Ground**. Serial chronicling the past two centuries of Australian history through an Irish-Australian working class family (y)
4.30 **Countdown**. Richard Whitley presents the words and numbers game with Martin Jarvis in the dictionary corner. Brenda Huxley from Ipswich is today's challenger
5.00 **The Adventures of Tintin**. Episode eight of *The Treasure of Rackham the Red* (y)
5.05 **The Oprah Winfrey Show: Celebrities' Best Friends**. Friends of showbusiness personalities talk about their relationships
6.00 **Kate & Allie**. Comedy about two divorcees sharing single parenthood (y)
6.30 **Desmond's**. Comedy about a south London black community, with Norman Beaton as the Peckham barber whose shop provides the base for local news and gossip (y). (Teletext)
7.00 **Channel 4 News**. (Teletext)
7.50 **Comment** followed by *Weather*
8.00 **Class by Class: The Shopkeeper's Tale**. **CHOICE**: Ray Goeling's latest subject for his examination of the British class system since 1945 is the Lyon family from Cheshire, Manchester. Phil Lyon, a lifelong saxophone player, gave up a lucrative career in marketing to run a music shop. His dad was a grocer, who remembers when shopkeepers looked up to teachers, doctors and lawyers but were on a higher social plane than factory workers. Phil married Ruth, a county standard tennis player brought up in the social manners of the tennis circuit. Their daughter is married to a rock musician. Despite its comfortable way of life the family insists that it is still working class. The strength of *Class by Class* is that it has started from individual cases rather than the theories of sociologists. But judgment on whether it has succeeded in pinning down a notoriously elusive concept must be reserved until after next week's final programme. (Teletext)
8.30 **Heart of Steel** (1983). Powerful and well-characterised television film about a group of steel workers in Ohio who battle to save their mill from closure. There are excellent performances from Peter Strauss, as the dedicated union man whose optimism is gradually consumed by bitterness and drink, and Pamela Reed, as his put-upon wife. Directed by Donald Wrye



The spirit of Baltic nationalism: festive Latvians (10.15pm)

10.15 **True Stories: Homeland**. **CHOICE**: This stylish evocation of Baltic nationalism comes from the Latvian film-maker Juris Podnieks and follows the style of his outstanding series on the Soviet Union, *Heidi, Do You Hear Me?* Podnieks is in Italy, trying to make a film about contemporary and present a montage of contemporary footage, interviews and archival material. But the absence of a single narrative voice does not preclude a point of view and the theme of *Homeland*, inevitably, is the proud but often tragic struggle of an oppressed people. Podnieks uses last year's Latvian Folk Festival, with its joyous celebration of the national spirit, as a counterpoint to the memories of Baltic citizens who either survived the Soviet gulag or were forced into exile abroad. The film is followed by a topical and events in the Baltic states, including the recent violence in Riga which claimed the lives of two of Podnieks's cameramen
12.05am **A Week in Politics - Late Sitting**. Includes why the NUM are withdrawing their sponsorship of Kevin Barry, MP, Labour spokesman on coal
12.35 **Channel 4 News - Midnight Special**. Ends at 2.00

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Cold comfort: Dan McMullan, a sheep farmer, walking on a snow-covered hillside at Clogh Mills, Co Antrim, where Ulster's first wind generator opened yesterday

More snow on the way for icy Britain

By MICHAEL HORNELL

BRITAIN shivered in the grip of the coldest snap for four years yesterday as MFs and charities for the elderly said the inflexibility of the cold weather payment system could put the lives of old people at risk.

With temperatures threatening to fall to -10C overnight, weathermen said that day-time temperatures could remain below freezing for several days with up to a foot of snow falling in the South-East.

Age Concern's criticism of cold weather payments followed a claim by Winter Action on Cold Homes, an umbrella group of charities, that hundreds could die this week if the government does not make cold weather payments automatic. It said: "The winter cull of Britain's frailtest must cease."

Last night David Winnick, the Labour MP for Walsall North, called unsuccessfully for an emergency debate and said it was "downright scandalous" that

needy pensioners were without cash help for emergency heating. The cold spell has already triggered the £5-a-week payments in more than 20 areas throughout the country - mainly in Scotland, the North, and the West Country, but also as far into the South-East as Stansted, Essex.

Cold weather payments are only granted after a local weather station records an average temperature of 0C or lower over seven consecutive days. Those entitled may only claim once the period is

completed. They are not paid automatically and have to apply to local social security offices. Payments are offered to social security claimants who have children under five, pensioners or the disabled. Pensioners get the money only if their savings are less than £1,000, while the other two groups are entitled only if they have less than £500 capital. In 1989-90 more than 44,400 such payments were made.

Age Concern, the charity for the elderly, said: "We are asking for the system to be made more flexible so money can be made more readily available and to a wider number of people."

Nicholas Scott, the social security minister, dismissed calls, however, for an increase in the payments. He said government help to the elderly had increased over the years and health department officials would be monitoring the cold to see that old people were not left vulnerable.

Virginia Bottomley, the health minister, said friends and neighbours should help the elderly stay warm. She told Britain's 12 million pensioners: "The key messages are: wrap up well, eat warming food and don't go out in the cold if you can avoid it."

Mrs Bottomley gave the advice

as she made a joint visit with Mr Scott to the London headquarters of Help the Aged. The headquarters is the base for the Winter Warmth Line - which offers advice to the elderly on how to beat the chill. The line, launched in the wake of the cold snap four years ago, has already had 6,700 calls this winter - double the number in the previous '12 months. Trained Help the Aged advisers man the free service and are available to give people tips on diet, fuel debts and benefits. The freephone Winter Warmth number is 0800-289-404.

The Meteorological Office advised people to check with radio and television forecasts before venturing out. It predicted the next 36 hours will get even colder and that the weather will worsen with heavy snowfalls likely today and Friday. Heaviest falls are likely in the east but snow is also expected in other parts of England and Wales, especially central areas. In the South-East, driving snow reduced visibility on many roads to 50 yards. Some roads in Sussex were described as impassable and police were advising people against travelling unnecessarily.

Taste of Siberia, page 6

Political sketch

Lords, ladies and a question of breeding

AS I entered their Lordships' House, Viscount Astor was facing Lord Tordoff. Astor is a Tory minister, Tordoff a Liberal Democrat; but what their exchange concerned I was too late to discover, arriving in time only to hear Lord Tordoff say "My Lords, we just go on, and on, and on."

"My Lords," replied the Viscount, "we will go on, and on, and on."

And they do. Lady Strange certainly does. Insofar as we dare shackle a free spirit such as Lady Strange to anything so earthbound as a political party, she is described as a Conservative; and hers was the next question. It was about sand eels. Apparently they are not breeding as they should in the Shetlands, and the bird population is going hungry.

The minister, Lord Strathclyde, replied that sand eels had been left to breed undisturbed since 1990, and it was not his fault (though he put it more politely) if the eels were not canoeing as vigorously as hoped. He was "consulting."

This did not satisfy Lady Strange. She blamed over-fishing. She wanted sanctuary for the eels' love-nests extended. As she reminded us, "the natural life-cycle of the sand eel is two years."

At this point their Lordships divided into three camps: those supporting the eels, those supporting the birds, and those supporting the fishermen. It was not an issue on which one could stay neutral.

Not was it one on which the redoubtable Baroness Sear found herself without expertise. For the Liberal Democrats, Lady Sear blamed the birds. Or I think so. Her intervention, a blustery affair, appeared to include the words "over-eating by birds". Anyone who knows Lady Sear knows that an expedition to Shetland by the baroness to lecture a flock of seagulls on its dietary habits, or consult with sooty terns, is well within the bounds of possibility.

Lord Strathclyde regretted that "it is not part of the

democratic process to consult those who do not necessarily have a vote". Lord Carmichael felt (if I understood him) that fishermen, who do have a vote, were entitled to sympathy, along with the eels and the birds.

Lord Grimond thought the feathered dimension had been over-simplified. Did birds eat only sand-eels? Lord Strathclyde (at cross-purposes with Lord Grimond) offered their Lordships a disquisition on the sex life of the sand eel. "It's the eggs," he muttered, brow furrowed, "the larvae". Something was hindering their production. "When we've discovered what it is, we will be able to see whether there's anything we can do about it." Stunned by his own candour, Lord Strathclyde sat down.

After this, Lord Hatch of Lusby took us to the Gulf. To describe Lord Hatch as "Labour" understates his commitment. He is a sort of nobleman's Dennis Skinner, who infuriates fellow peers by introducing into their House something called "politics" - a vulgarity from which their Lordships have taken refuge in the Upper Chamber.

His game yesterday was to torment Lord Cathness with an awkward question for the foreign office: whence came the evidence for HM's belief that Saddam Hussein had failed? Cathness, who answers with competent brevity, kept refusing to answer. Hatch kept refusing to withdraw. Their Lordships started a sort of aggressive moaning noise. As Cathness put Hatch finally down, the moans subsided.

I was leaving when Lord Henley spoke; the unlucky minister who has had to pilot the ill-starred statutory sick pay bill, whipped on by his relative, the chief whip, and opposed by two more of his relatives, Lord Stanley and Lord Russell.

"My Lords," Lord Henley was saying as I left, "we are living in the real world."

MATTHEW PARRIS

Propaganda plays on Iraqi hunger

Continued from page 1

promise of full Arabic hospitality, security, personal safety and medical welfare.

"You will be able to return to your family as soon as the current situation that Saddam has put us all into is brought to an end. My brother Iraqi soldiers, it is an open invitation for you and your brother fighters which we hope that you will respond to when the chance allows you."

As the relentless, round-the-clock allied bombing campaign against Iraqi positions continues, shaking the ground miles south of

the border, intelligence officers are optimistic that the steady trickle of Iraqis willing to give themselves up will soon become a flood.

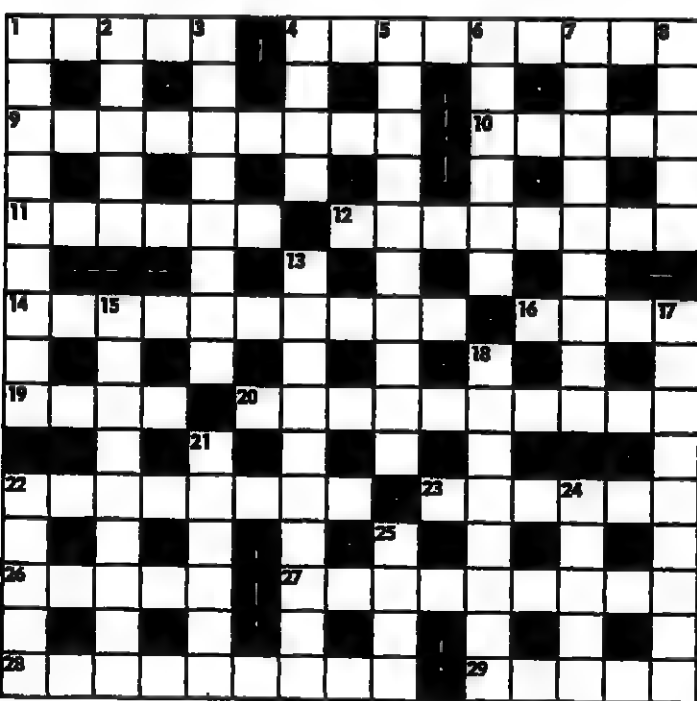
"One problem is that they have their own minefield defences in front of them and politically motivated officers behind who are ready to shoot down anyone attempting to desert," the Saudi officer said. "Once the land war begins in earnest, we expect the numbers coming across to grow substantially."

Last week the allies launched their "Psychops" campaign by dropping five million explanatory

leaflets about surrender. Frontline US troops also began lessons on how to recognise and accept Iraqi troops who wanted to give up. The course involved the teaching of rudimentary Arab phrases such as "put your hands up" and "throw down your weapon".

According to US commanders, there has been a growing morale problem among the Iraqi conscripts who man the bulk of the forward lines closest to the Saudi border. As well as the pressure of the bombing campaign, many have been restricted to one meal a day.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,523



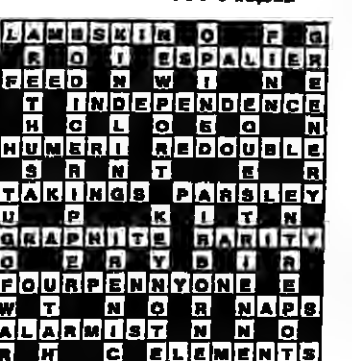
ACROSS

- 1 Machinery put in the ground (5).
- 4 Three-handed murderer (9).
- 9 Workers banded together to raise a flag (5,4).
- 10 Beat Henry, who got within two points (5).
- 11 Polish, but sounds Scandinavian (6).
- 12 Seeing about pictures being put back in order (8).
- 14 In trouble for smothering bird in awful ketchup (2,3,5).
- 16 Found 25 players (4).
- 19 Initially some hesitate over purchases here (4).
- 20 Dressing a boy in something funny (5,5).
- 22 Jokes about an eastern subject from the east (8).
- 23 A sweet and charming thing to be (6).

DOWN

- 1 Surplus of material used to make golfer's... (4-5).
- 2 ...dress with a stripe, say (5).
- 3 W Flint finally catches animal that's turned up (8).
- 4 Fish sometimes caught by oarsmen (4).
- 5 With appropriate treatment discontinued, suffer unpleasant results (4,3,3).
- 6 Seat that had overturned (6).
- 7 Being drunk, agreed on a non-alcoholic drink (9).
- 8 Taking the first lift (5).
- 13 Money bestowed on lost cause - a food additive (5,5).
- 15 Listening to a girl who's cheap (3,1,5).
- 17 Mistake at Epsom re owner of horse (3,6).
- 18 Quilms as worn-out horse strains at the bit noisily (8).
- 21 Secure some work where there are no tips (6).
- 22 Bill occupying position in Israel (5).
- 24 Not qualified to speak (5).
- 25 Woman had to discard (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,522



Concise Crossword, page 13

Eastern England will have frequent snow showers with a spell of more continual snow, giving several inches in places. Western England and Wales will have some snow showers and over the Midlands a longer spell is likely. Scotland and Northern Ireland will also have some snow showers with the heaviest in the East. Temperatures will stay below freezing in many places and there will be a strong east to northeast wind. Outlook: staying very cold with heavy snow in many places

MIDDAY: 1st-4th: 10-12: 13-14: 15-16: 17-18: 19-20: 21-22: 23-24: 25-26: 27-28: 29-30: 31-32: 33-34: 35-36: 37-38: 39-40: 41-42: 43-44: 45-46: 47-48: 49-50: 51-52: 53-54: 55-56: 57-58: 59-60: 61-62: 63-64: 65-66: 67-68: 69-70: 71-72: 73-74: 75-76: 77-78: 79-80: 81-82: 83-84: 85-86: 87-88: 89-90: 91-92: 93-94: 95-96: 97-98: 99-100: 101-102: 103-104: 105-106: 107-108: 109-110: 111-112: 113-114: 115-116: 117-118: 119-120: 121-122: 123-124: 125-126: 127-128: 129-130: 131-132: 133-134: 135-136: 137-138: 139-140: 141-142: 143-144: 145-146: 147-148: 149-150: 151-152: 153-154: 155-156: 157-158: 159-160: 161-162: 163-164: 165-166: 167-168: 169-170: 171-172: 173-174: 175-176: 177-178: 179-180: 181-182: 183-184: 185-186: 187-188: 189-190: 191-192: 193-194: 195-196: 197-198: 199-200: 201-202: 203-204: 205-206: 207-208: 209-210: 211-212: 213-214: 215-216: 217-218: 219-220: 221-222: 223-224: 225-226: 227-228: 229-230: 231-232: 233-234: 235-236: 237-238: 239-240: 241-242: 243-244: 245-246: 247-248: 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BUSINESS

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 7 1991

Business Editor
John Bell

Sterling tops \$2 despite bank action

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE dollar shrugged off fresh waves of concerted intervention by the central banks to fall to an historic low against the mark and allow the pound to climb above \$2.00 for the first time since June 1981.

Only half an hour after the second wave of dollar buying for marks, spearheaded by the Federal Reserve Board, dealers in London saw the American currency fall to DM1.4520. It closed at a record low of DM1.4500, a drop of 1.20 pence from the previous finish.

The highly public intervention, which began mid-afternoon when the dollar hit DM1.4570, was interpreted as a smoothing action, not an attempt to halt the slide.

Neil MacKinnon, chief economist at Yamaichi Securities, said the intervention would be insufficient to prevent the currency falling further, given the fundamentals of the American economy and widening interest rate differentials with Europe. "It's all coming home to roost," he said.

Soon after the support action, Nicholas Brady, the American treasury secretary, appeared to try to undermine the dollar, telling the Senate budget committee that he

would like to see lower interest rates.

Michael Boskin, the White House economic adviser, filled bearish market sentiment with remarks that he expected American prime rates to continue to decline, hinting at a cut of one percentage point.

As recession grips the United States, it was a half point cut in the American discount rate last Friday, the day after the Bundesbank raised German lending rates, that sent the dollar tumbling.

An early signal from the Bank of England through its money market operations made clear that the authorities were content with the present interest rate structure in Britain, still consistent with a 14 per cent base rate.

John Sheppard, senior economist at Warburg Securities, said the signal was "steady as you go".

The Bank sought to dash hopes of imminent cuts that were raised by remarks on Tuesday by John Major, the prime minister, about "sustained" cuts in interest rates.

Money market rates closed lower, easing back to their opening levels. The key three-month interbank rate was 1/8 softer at 13 1/8-13 3/4 per cent.

This lent support to the pound, which ended at \$2.0010, up nearly 2 cents from Tuesday's close. Against the mark it advanced nearly half a penny to DM2.9034, but remained at the bottom of the exchange-rate mechanism.

Sterling's trade-weighted index gained 0.1 per cent to 94.5.

The cost of German unification will force a revaluation of the mark within the European monetary system this autumn, allowing the central rate for the pound to be lowered to

DM2.80 within the exchange-rate mechanism, according to David Kern, chief economist at National Westminster Bank.

This lowering of sterling's central rate, in September or October, will be accompanied by a narrowing of the fluctuation bands to 2.25 per cent from the present 6 per cent.

Mr Kern expects the mark and Dutch guilder to be revalued by 2.4 per cent against the other ERM currencies in what would be the last realignment before the move to irrevocably fixed parities under European monetary union.

But Mr Kern sees no serious chance for Britain to devalue the pound unilaterally, especially as the authorities are still struggling to establish credibility within the ERM.

He described the current clamour for early interest rate cuts in Britain as "very unhelpful", but said that a half point cut in a month or so would be all right.

The "most serious" short-term problem was not the mark, but the weak dollar, Mr Kern said, as America is a large market for British exporters and a large part of British exports are dollar-denominated.

Gold was fixed at \$360.75 an ounce in London, its lowest afternoon fixing since July, after appearing to have lost its traditional status as a safe haven for investors in times of turbulence.

By the close it had rebounded \$3.0, but remained \$2.5 below Tuesday's finish and far below the \$411 high of January 17 after allied planes started bombing Iraq. Platinum hit a new five-year low and silver hovered near its lowest price for 16 years.



Light in the gloom: Derek Hunt, MFI chairman, says the increase in trading profits is particularly satisfactory

Jobs go as MFI sees difficult trading

By OUR CITY STAFF

MFI, the kitchen group that has \$471 million of debt, says it is surviving despite the recession but is unlikely to have a good second half. The company cut 500 jobs last month.

MFI, which arranged a \$95 million refinancing package in August 1989, made a pre-tax loss of £16.9 million in the six months to November 10, compared with an £8.8 million loss last year. Sales increased by 5.4 per cent to £321 million and trading profit by 5.1 per cent to £20.6 million but a \$34.9 million interest charge wiped out trading profits.

Derek Hunt, the chairman, said that as long as turnover did not fall dramatically, the group could survive within the terms of the refinancing package and would not have to return to its bankers. He said MFI could survive a fall in turnover of up to 20 per cent.

Although sales in the second half started badly, the company, a management buyout from Asda in 1987, is still trading above last year's level. Seven stores were opened and eight were relocated, giving a 9 per cent increase in selling space. Like-for-like sales in the first half were flat.

Mr Hunt said: "The increase in trading profit is particularly satisfactory in view of the continuing adverse economic climate and the difficulties being experienced by the retail trade. We have responded to these conditions by vigorous cost controls."

The market for flat-pack kitchens has been most badly hit. More than 40 per cent are sold to people who have just moved home, and that market has dropped with the slump in house sales. Flat-pack kitchens account for 33 per cent of MFI's business.

Lilley approves BPB's £128m French takeover

By OUR EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

THE go-ahead was given by Peter Lilley yesterday for the £128 million takeover by BPB Industries, Europe's biggest plasterboard maker, of the plaster and gypsum businesses of Poliet, the French construction group.

The trade secretary ruled against the advice of Sir Gordon Borrie, the director-general of the Office of Fair Trading, who had recommended the bid be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on competition grounds.

The last time a trade secretary overruled a referral advice by the fair trading office was in 1986, when Paul Channon, the then trade secretary, gave the go-ahead for the takeover of Screen Entertainment by Cannon. Mr

Lilley's decision came after last year's monopolies enquiry into the industry, which concluded that the market was no longer an effective monopoly dominated by BPB after the entrance of two competitors.

BPB, however, remains the strongest company in the sector even though its market share had fallen from 96 per cent to 65 per cent over the last two years. The monopolies commission also suggested the situation should be monitored continuously. At the time, BPB had been freed from previous commitments to the government.

The trade department said Mr Lilley "agreed with the director-general's view that the arguments for reference were finely balanced, and noted that the merger en-

hanced BPB's dominant position."

Mr Lilley, however, concluded that the competition issues were not sufficient to justify a merger reference. But he asked Sir Gordon to look at the British plaster market and consider a reference under the monopolies provision of the Fair Trading Act 1973 if the concentration in the plasterboard industry was working against the public interest.

● Sugar decision: A proposed bid for Berisford International's sugar arm by Tate & Lyle was blocked by the monopolies commission yesterday because it was against the public interest. The decision is academic after Associated British Food's purchase of British Sugar at the new year.

Davy to announce German disposal

By MARTIN WALLER AND WOLFGANG MÖNCHAU

DAVY Corporation, the engineer, is today expected to announce the sale of its German business to Metallgesellschaft, the diversified industrial group, for between £70 million and £85 million.

The business comprises Zimmer, one of the world's leading makers of synthetic fibre plants, and Davy Bama, a manufacturer of water treatment plant.

Davy has been the target of takeover speculation since last year's share price crash, with names such as Amec, the British contractor and engineer, and Mannesmann, the German company, mentioned.

The announcement came as something of an embarrassment at Davy's London headquarters, when it appeared on Reuters screens last night, because a German statement talked of a full takeover.

"The talks are far advanced. We expect to sign a deal any minute," insisted a Metallgesellschaft spokesman.

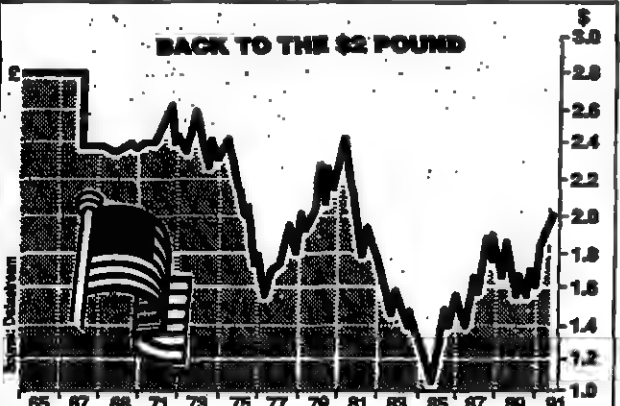
But Derek Hawkins, Davy's finance director, immediately denied the report, saying it was in talks with the German group relating to the sale of a subsidiary and not a complete takeover. He would give no further details except that a statement was expected soon.

Metallgesellschaft refused to comment further but said the Reuters report was correct. At last night's closing price, Davy has a market capitalisation of more than £150 million. The report suggested a price for the deal of between DM200 million and DM250 million. It is, therefore, thought that the talks relate to the German operations only.

In Britain Davy has a range of engineering activities including an offshore oil rig fabrication business. It has been planning a number of disposals.

The share price has slumped from 262p in June to as low as 65p in November on the unveiling of some disastrous interim figures, featuring a \$45 million write-off and a dropped dividend.

Davy has not always had the happiest of experiences in Germany. In 1988 it announced provisions totalling £17.5 million because of technical problems in building a flue gas desulphurisation plant in the then West Germany.



Provisions raised to £22m at Telfos

By MARTIN BARROW

TELFOS Holdings, the railway engineer for which William Cook has bid £26 million, has provided another £13 million against investments and guarantees, raising the total level of provisions to £22 million for last year.

The latest provisions follow publication of a report by Price Waterhouse, the company's auditor, which gives warning that it cannot advise on the illiquid nature of the investments and adverse market conditions.

Shares in Telfos plunged 41p to 57p after returning from suspension, casting doubts over the current offer

by William Cook, which was originally worth 114p a share. William Cook's advisers were last night studying the Price Waterhouse report and are expected to decide the future of the bid before tomorrow's first closing date. William Cook shares rose 1p to 209p.

Telfos also revealed a pre-tax loss of £300,000 for 1990, against profits of £5.3 million the previous year, after incurring a £3.4 million deficit on investment dealing. However, operating profits fell from £5.09 million to £3.4 million on turnover up from £44 million to £62.21 million, casting doubts on the quality of the company's £100 million order book.

Gulf war damages duty-free business

Allders stores seek refinancing

By GRILLIAN BOWDITCH

ALLDERS, the department store and duty-free group that was bought out by its management from Hanson for £224 million in May 1989, is seeking a refinancing from its banks. Concern about the group has been mounting for weeks.

Allders, which has 11 department stores in southern England, as well as duty-free shops at Heathrow and Gatwick airports, has called in Touche Ross, its accountant, to implement a large-scale cost-cutting exercise.

The company is in refinancing talks with its original backers, which include Prudential Venture Capital, the coal and railway workers' pension funds, 3i, Chemical Bank, National Westminster and Hambro Magan.

Hanson still has a 5 per cent stake, in addition to providing £40 million of the debt financing. About 100 Allders man-

agers took a 20 per cent stake in the group at the time of the buyout.

Suppliers to Allders have been worried for several weeks now and some have not been paid for deliveries, despite asking the company for initial cash. The final straw for the group has been the downturn in duty-free sales because of the slump in airport traffic since the Gulf war. Allders' duty-free business generates cash for the group. Other retailers have been experiencing sales slumps of up to 75 per cent in airport terminal shops.

Allders has a strong asset backing with properties estimated to be worth about £100 million by Verdict, the market research group.

All the properties, apart from the one in Basildon, Essex, are freehold or long leasehold. None has been actively marketed by the group, but parties that were interested in acquiring parts of the group when the original Hanson deal was done

are believed to have been approached again.

The strong property portfolio and the fact that Pru Venture Capital and 3i both have non-executive directors on Allders' board puts it in a strong position to achieve its refinancing, although banks are considerably less keen to do these deals than they were a year ago.

Allders' balance sheet for the year to September 1989 showed net debt of £135 million. In that year, the group made trading profits of £9.4 million, down from £15.4 million the previous year, on sales of £274 million, down from £284 million. Capital expenditure in 1989 was £5.8 million.

Allders has been hit by high interest rates, the recession and the uniform business rate, which has added 20 per cent a year to the group's rates bill. Allders is the second department store to have run into trouble in the past week, after Lewis's called in the receivers.

Reserves revealed at Union

By NEIL BENNETT BANKING CORRESPONDENT

UNION Discount has become the first discount house in the City to reveal its inner reserves and report its profits and balance sheet fully. The announcement came as the firm reported a 54 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £7.81 million last year.

Union's next annual report will show its inner reserve of £6.61 million, which has now been reclassified as a general bad debt provision. Graeme Gilchrist, the chairman, said the move had been in response to pressure from the City and shareholders.

There was a 1.07p rise in earnings per share to 57.02p. Union is paying a final dividend of 23.5p, making 35p for the year, a 6 per cent increase.

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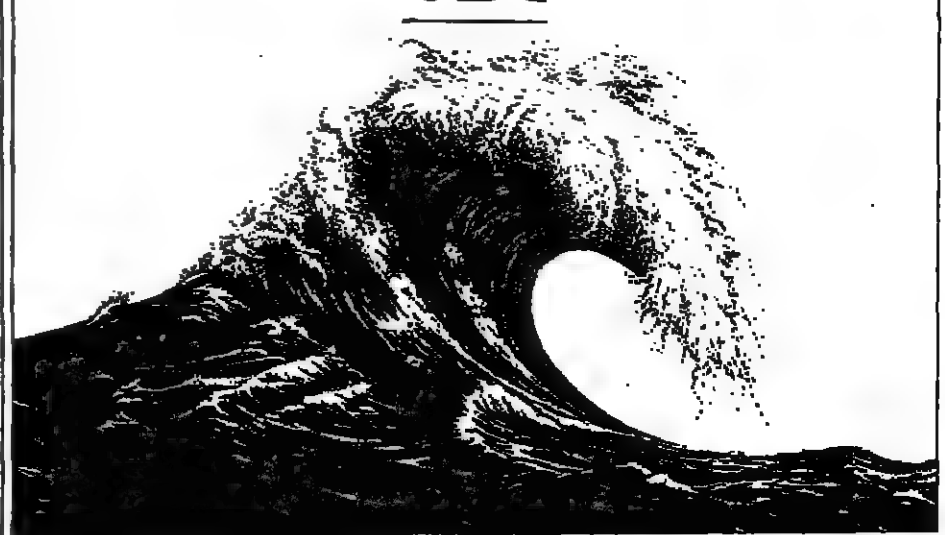
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US dollar
2.0010 (+0.0175)
German mark
2.9045 (+0.0050)
Exchange index
94.5 (+0.1)

FT 30 Share
1718.8 (-8.0)
FT-SE 100
2194.8 (-7.2)
New York Dow Jones
2808.91 (+20.54)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave
23852.04 (+130.47)

RISE
Henderson 945p (+70)
Kleinwort Benson 811p (+280)
SG Warburg 3811p (+140)
Vaux Group 187p (+10)
M&M 417p (+10)
Micro Focus 810p (+70)
Proudfoot Alexander 2811p (+150)
Hickdon 154p (+140)
Independent 255p (+20)
Anticline 337p (+20)

FALL
De La Rue 3824p (-130)
RMC Group 639p (-150)
Hewlett Packard 441p (-170)
Foster 122p (-100)
Laporte 480p (-80)
Union Discount 559p (-40)
Broken Hill 304p (-120)
News Corp 257p (-180)
Sothelys 700p (-130)
General Accident 483p (-110)
Crestar 91p

MARKET SENTIMENT
London: Bank Rate 14%
3-month interbank 13 1/8-13 3/4%
3-month wholesale bill 13 1/8-13 3/4%
US Prime Rate 9%
Federal Funds 8%
3-month Treasury Bill 5.94-5.95%
30-year Treasury 10 1/8-10 7/8%

CORPORATE BONDS
London:
£ 82.000 11.50%
£ 100.000 11.50%
£ 125.000 11.50%
£ 150.000 11.50%
£ 175.000 11.50%
£ 200.000 11.50%
£ 225.000 11.50%
£ 250.000 11.50%
£ 275.000 11.50%
£ 300.000 11.50%

GOVERNMENT BONDS
London:
£ 100.000 11.50%
£ 125.000 11.50%
£ 150.000 11.50%
£ 175.000 11.50%
£ 200.000 11.50%
£ 225.000 11.50%
£ 250.000 11.50%
£ 275.000 11.50%
£ 300.000 11.50%

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent (Mar) 82.10 bbl (\$19.70)
Denotes latest trading price

YOUNG'S
Bank Buy Sell
Australia \$ 21.40 20.00
Austria Sch 2.85 2.85
Belgium Fr 69.50 68.50
Canada \$ 11.57 10.87
Denmark Kr 7.42 6.87
France Fr 10.27 9.85
Germany DM 3.025 2.855
Greece Dr 330 310
Hong Kong \$ 11.50 10.50
Italy Lira 271 240
Japan Yen 111.50 105.00
Netherlands Gld 3.41 3.20
Norway Kr 11.85 11.15
Portugal Esc 200 180
South Africa Rd 5.55 4.95
Spain Ps 165.00 175.00
Sweden Kr 11.50 10.70
Switzerland Fr 2.55 2.415
Turkey Lira 5400 5300
USA \$ 2.00 1.95
Yugoslavia Dnr 35.00 27.00

Notes for small denomination bank only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to treasury cheques.
Retail Price Index (1985) (Consumer)

Lloyd's plan to seize more French business

By ANGELA MACKAY

LLOYD'S, the international insurance market, is planning to seize a large slice of the French insurance market over the next few years.

This resolve was declared by David Coleridge, the chairman of Lloyd's, in Paris yesterday.

Even though three-quarters of the Lloyd's business is sourced overseas, Lloyd's has only managed to secure less than 1 per cent of the French market, deriving about Fr600 million annually in premium income.

Mr Coleridge, in his address to the Assure Expo, said: "In future, I hope that we may come to be regarded not merely as an offshore repository for the large, unusual and difficult to place risk, but be accepted for what we are, an integral and vital element of the French insurance market."

Mr Coleridge said that after the freedom of services direc-

tive that came into force in July, Lloyd's potential market in Europe had increased markedly, considering that the Continent's population of 350 million had a per capita expenditure on insurance that was 41 per cent less than that in America.

Mr Coleridge pointed out that the side had started to turn for Lloyd's and that rates were hardening in the current renewal season that would hopefully create a "more realistic rate structure" this year.

Referring to the hostilities in the Gulf, Mr Coleridge said there was an increased demand for war risk insurance that "few other markets were either willing or able to provide".

This week, Lloyd's introduced a policy covering terrorist attacks or sabotage related to the Gulf war that members of the market's war committee yesterday said had generated considerable interest from the corporate sector, especially among American-based companies.

However, no such policies have yet been written.

Lloyd's said the conflict in the Middle East had given rise to widespread demand for "explicit coverage for malicious damage both at home and abroad".

As a result, the Lloyd's war committee had agreed to allow underwriters who wish to provide this particular form of cover to do so under a separate policy.

Recent messages that have been transmitted on Baghdad Radio have heightened concern of an escalation of terrorist attacks against Western targets.

War premiums fell by as much as 80 per cent in some instances, for example, hull premiums, as the allied forces declared air and sea supremacy in the Gulf, according to a spokesman.

Throgmorton net asset value falls

By OUR CITY STAFF

THE Throgmorton USM Trust, an investment trust that specialises in the United States Market, increased pre-tax income from £1.03 million to £1.1 million in the year to end-December, although the net asset value fell to 103.1p (151.5p).

Gross income was lower at £1.47 million, against £1.48 million. Earnings per share slipped from 4.16p to 3.71p. The total dividend is improved to 3.65p (3.3p).

Hugh Sykes, the chairman, said high interest rates had had a damaging effect on sentiment towards smaller companies, while bank credit restrictions caused investors to question the financial viability of some small companies.

Complex changes at Burns-Anderson

By MARTIN WALLER

THE Burns-Anderson Group, the recruitment and financial services business, has arranged a complex restructuring involving the cancellation of its potential earn-out payments and the disposal of a non-core business.

Burns-Anderson, where Sir John Harvey-Jones was chairman until last year, announced the sale of a small bank this week.

The group has now effectively torn up its earn-out agreement with Steve Kelland, who sold his pensions and investment business to the group in 1988, which would have paid him as much as £1.7 million in new shares.

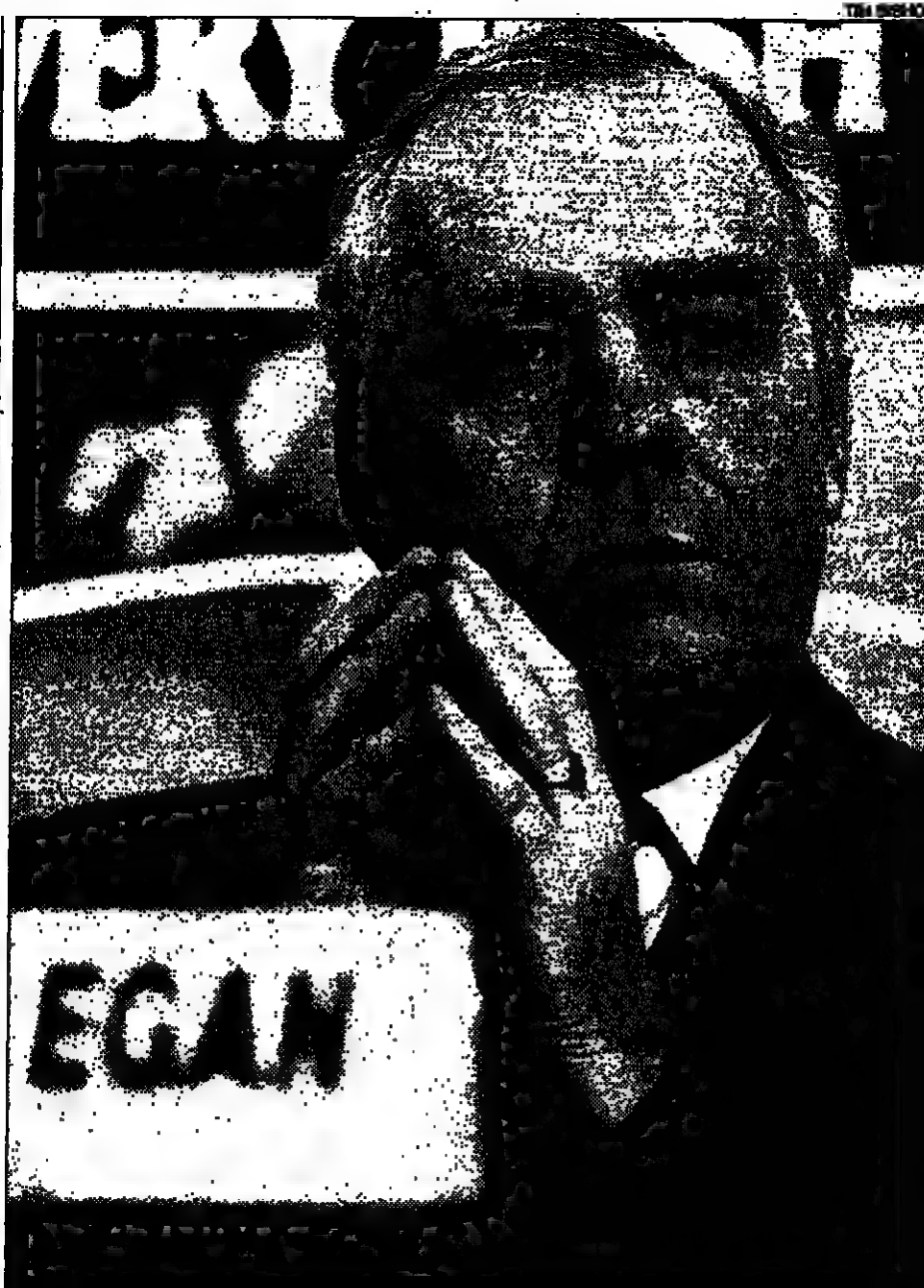
Because its current share price of 61p, a tenth of the level a year ago, is below the level of 10p nominal value, Burns-Anderson would have been

unable to issue the shares at that price. Instead, Mr Kelland will take £200,000 in cash and shares worth an additional £105,000 and also becomes entitled to 20 per cent of future profits in his business.

Another subsidiary, Ultimate Response, involved in direct marketing, is being sold back to the vendors in return for £500,000 in dividend payments already made.

Burns-Anderson, however, will continue to be owned £160,000 by Ultimate. Potential earn-out payments, totalling £10.18 million maximum, will not now be paid.

The group currently consists of two recruitment agencies, a financial advisory network and a small stockbroker, which Burns-Anderson is trying to sell.



Flying high at Stansted: Sir John Egan, chief executive of BAA, yesterday

Ryanair flights for Stansted

By PHILIP FANGALOS

RYANAIR, the independent Irish airline, is boosting Stansted's new £400 million terminal by transferring most of its operations from Luton to the Essex airport.

The news is most welcome to Stansted. However, the airport, which expects 1.5 million passengers this year, has only secured 15 per cent of available slots, while the timing of the opening of the new terminal, next month, has been hit by unfortunate external circumstances.

Sir John Egan, chief executive of BAA, said that the combined effects of the recession and the Gulf war are

likely to mean that Stansted's expected break even, which was due in 1994, is likely to be put back by one year.

Traffic at Gatwick suffered a 19 per cent fall in the first two weeks after the start of hostilities in the Middle East, while Heathrow's figures were down 24 per cent. Sir John said: "There has been no further drop off."

Sir John put on a brave face and said: "People will become used to the war. If the war goes on people will really have to make journeys."

Stansted is negotiating with other airlines, including American Airlines.

Ryanair will transfer its

operations from April 29. The carrier is being offered prime slots and will be able to operate "ideal departure times". P J McGoldrick, Ryanair's chief executive, said: "The decision to operate into Stansted represents the culmination of a 12-month turnaround by the airline."

Ryanair made losses of Ir£6 million (£5.47 million) in 1988 and Ir£4.5 million in 1989. Mr McGoldrick said that last year's losses are expected to be in the region of the year before last, although he stressed: "We expect to make a profit in 1991."

Ryanair will split 50/50 between Stansted and Luton.

Company doctor for Stakis



At his fingertips: Sir Lewis ready to bring his remedial skills to the aid of Stakis

SIR Lewis Robertson, one of Scotland's best-known company doctors, is to be chairman of Stakis, the Glasgow hotels and leisure group, following the retirement of Sir Reo Stakis, the founder (Martin Waller writes).

The announcement was met with relief in the stock market, which marked the share price up 3p to 39p on the news. Concern has grown about mounting debts at Stakis, £151 million at the last financial year end, and its exposure

to two of the most troubled sectors of the economy. The company stressed that Sir Lewis, aged 69, was not chosen because of his skills as a company rescuer, but Neil Chishman, the finance director, admitted: "He's joining on the basis that the skills you need for that are going to be very useful to us. He will be reviewing businesses we are in and reviewing our structure and generally putting a firm hand on the tiller."

Sir Lewis's rescues include Triplex Lloyd, the engineer, Borthwicks, the meat group, and Lilley, the builder.

The company in October after a boardroom row. Asked if there were to be any more board changes after the new chairman's appointment, Mr Chishman said: "That would be for him to look at."

Sir Reo, aged 78 this year, opened his first restaurant in Glasgow in 1947. Andros, his son, remains as managing director.

Sir Lewis's rescues include Triplex Lloyd, the engineer, Borthwicks, the meat group, and Lilley, the builder.

Pan Am expects new loan of \$100m

From PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

A FRESH financial lifeline is expected to be thrown to Pan Am Corporation, which cut 4,000 jobs and some European flights on Tuesday. The airline said it expected imminent access to a \$100 million loan from Bankers Trust and United Airlines.

The loan has already been sanctioned by the bankruptcy court, but is conditional on the American transport department approving Pan Am's sale of its London routes to United Airlines for \$290 million. A spokesman for Pan Am said: "We expect approval later today (Wednesday)."

Analysts say the loan is crucial. When filing for bankruptcy protection on January 7, Pan Am had only \$27 million in cash which it said would last just a few days. A short-term loan of \$50 million by Bankers Trust and United appears to have lasted almost five weeks amid a sharp fall in passenger traffic. The new loan is key to Pan Am's survival while it awaits approval from the British aviation regulators.

Sale of its five routes into Heathrow was agreed with United more than three months ago, but America and Britain are still no nearer to reaching an agreement which might grant approval. A resolution of those talks hinges on the American government giving British Airways greater access to the domestic market. Talks broke up in anger last week and an American government spokesman said: "As far as I know there are no further talks arranged. I'm sure there are some planned." The Pan Am spokesman added: "We are still confident that the differences can be resolved."

Pan Am has cut more than one in five jobs since last autumn. The airline's European bookings are down between 20 per cent and 50 per cent from last year, with the largest reductions in travel to London and Rome. Total transatlantic bookings have fallen 15 per cent since the Gulf war began. A Pan Am spokesman refused to rule out more cuts.

Bad debt rise fails to halt Lawrie

By NIEL BENNETT BANKING CORRESPONDENT

DUNCAN Lawrie, the private bank, increased pre-tax profits by 4 per cent to £1.09 million last year despite a rise in bad debts.

Nick Grant, the chairman, said there had been a small increase in the bank's bad debt provisions, although the difference was slight since the bank's loan book is now only £20 million.

Duncan Lawrie suffered a fall in assets in London during the year, partly because of the strength of sterling, which encouraged investors to move funds abroad.

The bank's pensions department grew with the acquisition of Patrick MacNamee and Associates, while the investment department's assets under management grew to £50 million during the year.

Duncan Lawrie's offshore subsidiary, in the Isle of Man, increased profits by 41 per cent.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Management to buy Reedpack division

SVENSKA Cellulosa, the Swedish forestry group, has agreed to a Kr375 million (£34 million) management buyout of Reedpack Plastics Group, a division of Reedpack, the paper and packaging group. Reedpack Plastics, which employs 500 staff in Britain, makes plastic containers and has sales of over £50 million per year.

Svenska said the division is a non-core activity for Reedpack, which it bought last year. The management team expected financial backing from CIN Venture Managers on behalf of its clients, which are British Coal, Barclays Bank Pension Funds and British Rail. Payment will be made in two tranches, 60 per cent at completion and the balance after three years. Reedpack was also formed as a result of MBO of the packaging and paper interests of Reed International for £609 million in 1988.

Redland for Yugoslavia

REDLAND, the building materials group, is defying general pessimism about Yugoslavia's future by setting up a joint venture firm with two local companies in Slovenia, the Yugoslav republic most determined to gain independence. The joint venture company will manufacture concrete roof tiles for the Slovenian and Croatian markets from May but it might expand later.

Irish Sugar lifts profits

IRISH Sugar, the semi-state-owned sugar manufacturing group, increased pre-tax profits from Ir£17.1 million (£15.65 million) to Ir£22 million in the year to end-September. Turnover, boosted by acquisition, advanced to Ir£271.4 million (Ir£215.6 million). Earnings per share rose to 27.8p (23.4p). There was an extraordinary charge of Ir£5.93 million.

RJR pact on pensions

RJR Nabisco Holdings, the food and tobacco group, has agreed with the Transport and General Workers' Union to resolve a dispute over control of £30 million surplus funds held in a pension scheme. A union statement said the agreement would give 72.5 per cent of the surplus to the pensioners and the rest to RJR.

The dispute arose after RJR sold its European operations, including Huntley & Palmers, Peek Frean and W&R Jacob, the British biscuit manufacturers, to BSN of France two years ago. RJR Nabisco had retained control of the pension funds.

Babcock sells consultancy

BABCOCK Prebon, the money broker and lease packager, has sold its pensions consultancy business to the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation for £3.25 million.

The company is keeping assets worth £700,000 from the business to sell separately. The money will be used to start repaying debts, which Babcock renegotiated with banks last year.

Kingsgrange buyout plan

SHARES in Kingsgrange, the toiletries manufacturer, rose 9p to 39p after senior management revealed it made an approach to bid for the company at a premium to a mid-market price of 27.5p. The management team, led by Roger Whitehead, chief executive, and James Nelson, non-executive chairman, is supported by Foreign & Colonial Ventures.

Norwegian oil licences

NORWAY will offer 22 oil and gas exploration licences on 34 offshore blocks today to firms that applied under the thirteenth licensing round. The round comprises 22 blocks and parts of blocks, 22 in the North Sea, five off mid-Norway and six in the Barents Sea. Some blocks received multiple applications, others none.

Details of which blocks were offered will not be published until the firms have replied, but Norwegian firms Den Norske Statoil, Norsk Hydro and Saga Petroleum will all be offered blocks, the oil ministry said.

Birse Group ahead at £5.55m despite making provisions

By MARTIN BARRON

BIRSE Group, the construction and plant hire company, increased pre-tax profits from £5.24 million to £5.55 million in the half-year to the end of October after providing £2.36 million against development financing in its housebuilding division. The company has also written off £500,000 in bad debts owed by two private property developers.

Operating profits rose from £5.09 million to £6.20 million. Birse netted £1.71 million in interest earned on cash deposits of more than £30 million, up from £1.1 million in 1989.

Earnings fell from 6.8p a share to 5.6p, reflecting a near 29 per cent increase in the number of shares in issue. But the interim dividend is increased from 1.5p a share to 1.65p.

Despite the solid performance, Peter Birse, the chairman, gave a warning that trading conditions in the industry would deteriorate further unless there was a quick

reduction in interest rates. "It is very bad out there," he said. "Fortunately we are in a strong position, but unless the Chancellor offers some relief more firms are going to come to grief. You cannot squeeze people with high interest rates for three years."

Turnover rose from £105 million to £168 million, helped by a 60 per cent growth in business volumes in Birse Construction, the main subsidiary. Margins were maintained "at a reasonable level" by putting pressure on suppliers to cut their own costs but scope for similar action was now limited, said Mr Birse.

Profits from plant hire, which is engaged in civil engineering and offshore activities, were down by 20 per cent.

Birse Homes made further unspecified losses on operations in the South-west, where building has been delayed on about 220 plots until the market shows signs of recovery.

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East Germans await their boom

By WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU, EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

FOR the men and women in the dole queues of Berlin, Rostock and Dresden there is little consolation from the German government about their economic prospects.

It was confirmed yesterday unemployment and short-term work in January continued to rise and now affects one third, or 2.6 million, of eastern Germany's 8 million working population. Of those, about 1.4 million are effectively unemployed. A year ago unemployment was negligible.

Last July, the people of the old East Germany were told nobody would suffer through unification and the introduction of the deutschmark. Soon after, when they did suffer as prices rose, they were told by the government that this was only a short-term phenomenon

and by this spring the long-awaited economic boom would begin. The region, to quote a Bundesbank euphemism, was going through "creative destruction".

Destruction it is, but there is so far no evidence of much creativity in the process. On the surface, East German unemployment, at 750,000, in January, or 8.6 per cent of the workforce, is about the same as the West European average, even though it represents a rise of 100,000 since December. But the figures are misleading.

A large proportion of unemployment is concealed under the cover of the so-called short-time working regulations. They include a controversial zero-hours clause, which allows employers

to lay off staff who are then entitled to some compensation from the government. These people do not fall into the dole count. Short-term unemployment now stands at 1.9 million, of which about one-third work little or not at all.

During this year, the situation will inevitably become worse. The Treuhandschaft, the Berlin privatisation agency, has still to make some tough decisions about company closures.

The agency's original estimate that a third of the 8,000 former combines will have to close still holds. But only a few dozen companies have so far closed. When the closures finally come, probably in the middle of the year, the unemployment figures will soar.

Also in the middle of the year, about 500,000 civil servants of the former regime will be out of a job as their contracts come to an end. By then East Germany might have reached a level of about 3 million unemployed.

There is another aspect. It is estimated that every 1 million unemployed cost the German government about DM10 billion in benefits a year, and this puts further strains on the budget deficit, which is estimated to reach DM140 billion this year.

The Bundesbank has already raised interest rates by half a per cent. If the trend continues, monetary policy could be tightened further, irrespective of the many protestations from Bonn or abroad.

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Lateral thinking for tax cuts

The conventional view, as so often at this time of year, is that the Chancellor will have little room for manoeuvre in next month's Budget. There is, however, a glimmer of hope. Economic gurus polled by *Economic Affairs*, organ of the Institute of that name, nearly all favour cutting some taxes, notably corporation tax. An overall tax-cutting Budget is favoured from such diverse standpoints as those of Lloyds Bank's centrist Christopher Johnson, sound money pessimist Stephen Lewis and Liverpool's Patrick Minford, a nostalgic fan of Reaganomics.

Some useful lateral thinking has been going on. Inevitably, this all stems from sterling's entry into the ERM and the unexpected short-term effects. Before entry, it was widely understood that the exchange rate against the mark would govern interest rate movements. If the government wanted to make independent policy moves, it would therefore have to go back to a more active fiscal policy instead of Nigel Lawson's desired steady, balanced budget. That

was the main reason true monetarists opposed ERM entry. The CBI and others expected the pegging of sterling to pave the way for a rapid fall in interest rates as the risk went out of the currency. To keep up the fight against inflation, the government could if necessary adopt a tougher fiscal policy.

Things did not work out quite like that. The depressed domestic economy cries out for more interest rate cuts but, according to Norman Lamont's thinking, the exchange rate has not allowed them, for fear they might have to be reversed if the pound fell to the bottom of its ERM range and markets scented devaluation.

The idea of offsetting transitional monetary and fiscal policies can, however, be applied in reverse. Tax cuts can help the economy even if interest rate cuts cannot. If there are still worries over domestic inflation, then the cuts could be concentrated in non-inflationary areas such as

corporation tax or, more controversially, excise duties or employers' national insurance contributions.

In the looking-glass world of the foreign exchanges, which are now driven by short-term financial flows rather than trade, this can produce some odd results. Tax cuts could even allow faster interest rate cuts.

As Professor Minford points out, the experience of the Reagan years was that a rise in the budget deficit from tax cuts strengthened the dollar rather than weakened it "essentially because the markets expect the greater strength of the economy after tax cuts to hold interest rates up for longer". If the focus on future interest rate cuts were abandoned in favour of other means of reviving the economy, sterling might well rise strongly within

the ERM, thus facilitating quick cuts in interest rates as well.

This would not merely be sleight of hand. The exchange markets fear the prospect of a long and progressive reduction in sterling interest rates. The deeper Britain's recession, the further interest rates might fall.

Judging from John Major's latest repetition of his plan for a sustained drop in interest rates at some future date, this lateral thinking has, however, cut no ice at No 10 Downing Street or in the Budget preparations next door.

Open secret

There is a sense of anticlimax now Union Discount has opened its coffers for public view. A grand City institution like Union, whose rooms are

lined with oil paintings and antique clocks, might have had more interesting secrets than a £6.6 million emergency reserve.

Nevertheless, Union's disclosure is the writing on the wall for all discount houses, which have to follow under European laws by 1993. Until now, they have been the epitome of discretion.

Interim results are unheard of. A house simply declares a dividend and makes a cryptic comment on trading. Annual profit figures can be misleading since they are smoothed by transfers to, or from, inner reserves.

Merchant banks and discount houses were allowed this dispensation for the good of their depositors and shareholders. It was assumed that investors would be frightened by the violent cycles in profits, and this would lead to an unacceptable volatility in share prices. This in turn could lead to loss of

confidence, and at worst a run on deposits. So long as dividends rose in an uninterrupted line, ran the argument, ignorance was bliss.

The argument holds little water, and thankfully the European Commission has had nothing to do with it. In their desire for secrecy, the directors of the merchant banks and discount houses conveniently forgot that shareholders are in fact the firms' owners. They are entitled to full information about their property.

Shareholders in the clearing banks have had an abundance of bad news in the past decade and stuck to their investment. Depositors for their part are rarely swayed by an institution's financial performance. Most would sooner put faith in the silent hand of the Bank of England regulators and the Deposit Protection Scheme.

Union Discount has finally come clean. Merchant banks like Schroders and Hambros, and other discount houses like Gerard & National should reveal themselves willingly, before the European Commission forces them to strip.

Training gets tougher in the race for world sales



Sir Norman Fowler: slightly disparaging perspective

"The British workforce is a sleeping giant. Or, perhaps more precisely, a giant whose energies and capacities are too rarely fully realised or released at work. Those energies are left to find release in other ways - programming the video recorder, or improving the performance of cars or motorbikes."

Behind this slightly disparaging perspective put forward by Sir Norman Fowler, when still employment secretary, lies something crucial to Britain's economic future: that the workforce is under-trained, and therefore under-skilled - and that makes British companies and the British economy uncompetitive in world markets.

This is not a new problem. In 1863, a royal commission on schools said that unless general and technical education was improved, "we shall gradually but surely find that our superiority in wealth and perhaps in energy will not save us from decline".

Britain's training problem used to be largely ignored, solvable by poaching skilled staff from other employers. Now training is a real issue for companies, and a political football which prompts bitter inter-party argument, as yesterday's Commons debate on the subject demonstrated.

Training is big business. Government estimates suggest that about £35 billion, roughly equivalent to 8 per cent of total GDP, is spent on it annually - £20 billion of that by employers. Big figures, though at company level it looks perhaps less impressive.

Peter Wickens, personnel director at Nissan's motor plant in the Northeast, says his training budget for 1990 was £1.5 million. Even for a Japanese company with a high training commitment, that is no more than £600 per employee.

In Germany, all 16-year-olds go into some form of education or training. In America, 94 per cent go into it full-time. In Japan, it is 92 per cent. In Britain, it is 50 per cent: 100,000 young people every year go into work with no training. Such comparisons, coupled with skill shortages across all industries flowing from the near-universal abandonment of training in the 1980-81 recession, have led the government to act.

Michael Howard, the employment secretary, talks in

radical terms of the government's two training objectives. "We have to revolutionise the attitude of employers, and we have to revolutionise the attitude of individuals. Both these revolutions are under way."

For individuals, the government is setting up a system of recognised national vocational qualifications as a means of increasing skills. Also, from April, a new scheme of training credits will be piloted in ten areas round the country. This will offer 32,000 young people vouchers worth about £1,000 to buy training from an employer or recognised training provider. Treasury ministers are also considering industry's call for a tax allowance as an incentive to study for a recognised training qualification.

For employers, the government is promoting a training quality programme called

responsibility for public programmes.

That handover has its problems. After the first five audits of local Tecs, Sir Geoffrey Holland, permanent secretary at the employment department, wrote to all Tecs chairmen, urging them to take action against the "weakness in financial management" the audits had revealed. A "disquieting overall picture" involved substantial overpayment of public funds, which is now being reclaimed. Mr Howard denies that the audits disclose fundamental difficulties with Tecs, arguing instead that they demonstrate the strengths of the audit systems.

Labour supports the Tec system, providing it works, though Tony Blair, the party's employment spokesman, believes the government's voluntarist approach will not provide the training Britain needs, and this week unveiled a clever variant of Labour policy that maintains the competition to train Labour's is essential, but blends it with the Tec system and IIP quality control.

The real difficulty now is the recession. Companies are still spending on training, according to CBI figures, which show that 76 per cent of firms are maintaining or increasing their training spend. But the number spending less as the recession bites harder is growing. It was up by almost two-thirds in the last three months, rising even more sharply among smaller companies.

Budgets are under pressure at the same time as training demand is likely to grow, forced up by rising unemployment. Though Mr Howard is keen to promote training, details on his department's confirmed that the Treasury has cut more than £300 million from government training spending for the next financial year.

Companies are struggling hard to maintain their training spending and commitment, but as one chief executive in the manufacturing sector said: "It's asking a bit much to want us to keep up our training when at the first sign of the going getting tough, the government cuts its own training budget."

PHILIP BASSETT
Industrial Editor

Banking on bad debt news

TEMPUS

profits have been obliged to second guess each bank's attitude towards non-performing loans instead of basing their estimates on underlying trading. This is inevitably a stab in the dark but most expect profits at Barclays, Lloyds, and National Westminster to fall by about 40 per cent, with Midland on break even.

In contrast Abbey National should report a reasonable advance, its specialisation in domestic mortgage lending has protected it from the storm of corporate bad debts.

Analysts forecasting 1990

Bank (share price)	1989	1990
Abbey National (285p)	572	531
Barclays (273p)	800	582
Lloyds (313p)	638	715
Midland (174p)	22	281
NatWest (242p)	500	404

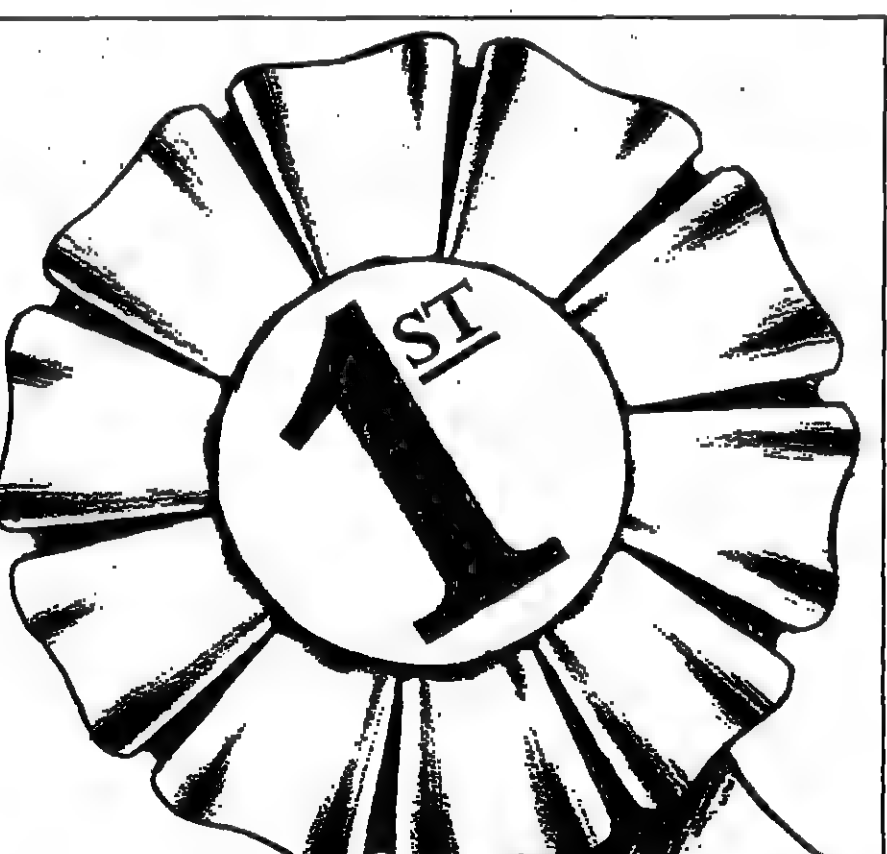
1990 figures are forecasts from Smith New Court
Profits for 1989 are taken after exceptional third world debt provisions.

are rising as Japanese and American institutions withdraw from the market. Barclays' margins on new loans are said to have doubled since the autumn, and the trend could boost income dramatically.

This crumb is hardly enough to justify the recent jump in share prices. The banks have outperformed the market by 10 per cent since the Gulf war started and are at their highest relative to the market for more than a year.

Ratings now range from 14 times forecast 1990 earnings for NatWest, down to 9 for Abbey National. Midland has the highest prospective dividend yield of 14.6 per cent, with healthier banks ranging between 5 and 9 per cent. Last summer, others had reached double digits.

The confidence may be premature. Bankers agree the rate of bad debts is worsening, and any fall in interest rates will only bring relief late in the year. Write-offs for 1991 could be higher than last year. Investors should wait for all the bad news to emerge.



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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Calendar of coincidence

AFTER finally seeing the back of Sir Ron Brierley, the New Zealand corporate raider who sold his 20 per cent stake in the engineering group this week, Vickers has made new strides forward in an unfamiliar area: wall calendars. For the Rolls-Royce or Riva powerboats group has been inundated with calls from British soldiers in the Gulf requesting copies of its latest work, which features demurely clad ladies rather than tanks. "It is apparently one of the few calendars they can have out there which will not offend the Saudis," says a spokesman for Vickers Defence Systems, who has nevertheless been surprised by the demand. The calendar tells the story of a young regimental tank officer home on leave towards the end of the first world war before returning to fight in Mesopotamia - the site, today, as luck would have it, of Iraq. Vickers insists it is all just a coincidence, and has set aside an extra hundred

copies to keep the troops happy.

AMONG the runners finishing last in a marathon in Adelaide, Australia, last week was an older man wearing a T-shirt with the slogan: "Abominably Slow Man".

Doyen of the dram THE bitterly cold weather should do little harm to the Scotch whisky industry, which has enjoyed a steady rise in sales since hitting a low point five years ago. But, dare it be said, the traditional dram may soon be replaced by the dubious delights of whisky mixed with lemonade, coke and other corruptions. Such is the view of Alan Gray, doyen of whisky analysts, and author of the popular annual review of the Scotch whisky industry which is published today. "In Scotland, lemonade is often mixed with whisky," says Gray, a chartered accountant by training, who has spent the last 17 years with Campbell Neill, the Glasgow stockbroker now owned by Charterhouse Finance. To the envy of his fellow analysts, Gray spends much of his time

visiting distilleries in Scotland and keeping up with the latest trends. "It is a real chore, although the whisky always tastes infinitely better there," he adds with a wink. Demand for such delights of Bunnahabhain - a product of Islay off the western Scottish coast - and the unlikely-sounding Sheep Dip, a blend of several malts, continues to pour in. Traditional demand from Japan and America aside, Gray has just received an unusual request from Latvia. Someone there has decided to purchase a container-load of whisky - perhaps looking for a quick turn on the local black market - and has asked him to recommend a suitable brand.

HEADLINE on the front page of a Louisiana newspaper: "Crayfish workers feeling the pinch".

Workout lunches PORTLY stockbrokers used to a customary diet of long, stodgy and alcoholic client lunches will be horrified to learn that a new fitness craze is sweeping the City. Aerobics, it seems, is the most popular exercise, for men and women

alike, according to Broadgate Club, where membership costs £850 a year. It is one of several health clubs that have sprung up within the Square Mile. Dealers and brokers from UBS Phillips & Drew, Warburgs and Hoare Govett - all conveniently nearby - are apparently discovering the dubious joys of Cardiofunk, Reebok Steps and a host of dance-related workouts. "Men seem to be getting in on the act as much as women," says Frue Redfern, director of the club, adding that one unnamed stockbroker became so over-excited during one of the routines that he crashed through a wall - leaving a mansized hole in the process. "We do see a change in our members as the day goes on," she adds. "In the morning they are on autopilot, at lunchtime they are enormously aggressive, and in the evening they are much more relaxed."

NOTICE on a stallholder's barrow in Chapel Market, Islington: "A prune is a plum with experience".

JON ASHWORTH

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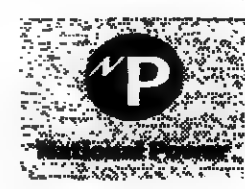
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BRITISH FUNDS	
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Share Price	Share Price

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Share Price	Share Price

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS	
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UNDATED	
Share Price	Share Price

INDEX-LINKED	
Share Price	Share Price

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Share Price	Share Price

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES Stocks slip on profit-taking

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began January 23. Dealings end tomorrow. \$Contango day February 11. Settlement day February 18. \$Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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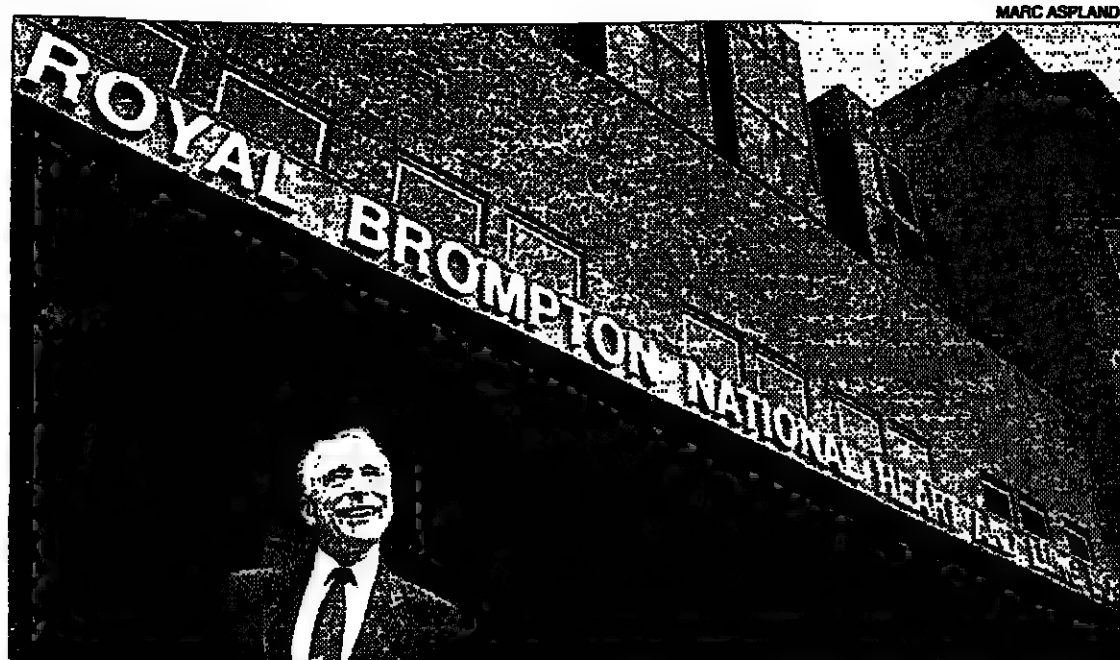
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Moving in: John Plant, of the special health authority, which has a £40 million budget for the next year

To the heart of the matter after 25 years

Today, when the Queen opens a £22 million heart and lung hospital and two research institutes in London, it will be the realisation of a dream begun more than a quarter of a century ago. Pat Blair reports

When the Queen opens the £22 million Royal Brompton National Heart and Lung Hospital in Chelsea, west London, today, it will be the realisation of a plan that was first mooted in the Sixties.

Now, more than 25 years later — because of National Health Service stops and starts, changes in government planning and funding and several NHS reorganisations — the rebuilding on a single site of the National Heart Hospital and the Brompton Hospital, and their two research institutes, is complete, and a second phase is expected to be finished in four or five years' time.

Financing of this first 209-bed phase of the hospital has been met mainly by the health department, £18 million coming from the sale of land owned by the two hospitals. The University Funding Committee and trust funds of the board of governors also made contributions.

The hospital, along with its sister hospital, the Royal Brompton Victoria Park (formerly the London Chest Hospital) in east London,

forms a postgraduate special health authority (SHA) under the NHS, but is funded directly by the health department. Its total budget for the coming financial year will be slightly more than £40 million, which, according to John Plant, the SHA's chief executive, is "not enough". The Royal Brompton's revenue budget in 1991-92 will be £22 million.

An overspend from last year is being contained within this financial year. Mr Plant says: "The government grant for next year is quite substantially higher, but we are afraid that a lot of the so-called development money will be absorbed by inflation and pay awards."

From April, direct funding will continue, but on a changed basis instead of being given a lump sum to do its job, there will be a contract between the NHS management executive and the SHA to provide research, development and teaching for the NHS. "The contract will be in fairly general terms to start with," Mr Plant says. "It will gradually become more precise as time goes by, so that we shall agree exactly

what research, development and teaching we shall carry out, and will be paid accordingly."

That could, he accepts, change the hospital's direction of research because the executive may want to influence what is done. "We shall clearly want to advise them about the sort of research we should be doing," Mr Plant says, "so there will be dialogue between us."

The Royal Brompton deals with about 18,000 in-patients and 75,000

'Staff and patients seem to think the aim of a caring environment has been achieved'

out-patients a year. Of those, some are from overseas.

As a result of an intergovernmental health treaty made in the mid-Seventies, there is quite a close relationship with the Soviet Union, which has provided an increasing number of patients in the past year. The hospital attracts a lot of



Care in the cot: Dr Elliot Shinebourne, a consultant paediatric cardiologist, at the hospital, and 18-month-old Eliza Fraser

patients from Iceland and Greece because of direct contracts with their governments.

"In an average year, we get patients from probably about 50 countries," Mr Plant says. Earnings from such patients help boost the hospital's private income of about £5 million or £6 million for research.

In the upheaval of change, there have been winners and losers. An obvious winner is the new department of imaging. The paediatric department, too, has gained, as Dr Elliot Shinebourne, a consultant paediatric cardiologist, admits. Further expansion of the department is hampered by the shortage of trained specialist nurses, a national problem that is being looked into by Jenny Hunt, the hospital's chief nurse.

A loser has been the separate area for adolescent cardiac patients, which operates under the guiding hand of Dr Jane Somerville. The loss of the unit has greatly upset Dr Somerville, who has the backing of other cardiologists. The services will continue, she says, but the development in which great inter-

national interest has been shown is likely to be curialed.

Generally, the NHS has not catered for adolescents — patients are either adults or children — although there is growing understanding that teenagers with congenital, chronic or life-threatening diseases experience additional problems because of puberty.

Mr Plant, who has observed those teenagers with respiratory disease and cardiac problems, accepts that adolescent patients require special facilities, a degree of separation. "We do intend," he says, "to make better provision when we build phase two, which will include the respiratory patients as well."

The aim has been to create a caring, attractive environment for the hospital, he says, reproducing as much as possible the atmosphere that existed in the old buildings for nearly 150 years.

At the same time, it would be a building in which the most advanced medicine, using the latest technology, could be practised. Mr Plant says: "Most of the staff and patients seem to think these aims have been achieved."

Arresting the cardiac killer

Prevention is as important as cure to surgeons investigating new techniques

The merged hospital boasts the best cardiac facilities in Europe, says Professor Philip Poole-Wilson, the head of the department of cardiac medicine. (Pat Blair writes).

"It will be one of the largest, if not the largest, cardiac centres in Europe. It can easily compete on the European scene and certainly compete with the large American centres," he says.

"What we are putting together is a cardiological facility which is up to the best of other centres internationally," he says. The centre's goals are to deliver health care to patients and also advance the subject of cardiology, collaborating with other centres around Britain.

Some of the most dramatic advances in medical care have occurred in cardiology over the past 20 years and there has been a substantial drop in death from heart disease, although it remains the biggest killer. New found treatments include drugs to combat thrombosis, cardiac transplant surgery and angioplasty, the procedure in which a tiny "balloon" is pumped up inside a narrowed blood vessel to open up the free flow of blood.

"The key thing we do here is to bring together clinical activity and basic science," Professor Poole-Wilson says. "Our major attribute is that we have a very large group of basic scientists — about 350 within the institute — who interact with a large group of doctors who have heart and lung disease as their sole objective."

The hospital draws people of international standing, among them Dr Ulrich Sigwart, a German doctor. He came to the hospital from Lausanne, in Switzerland,

where he developed the self-expanding, elastic and pliable stent, a tube woven from stainless steel that is inserted into an artery after balloon angioplasty. The tube is a key component in lining the diseased part of the artery and helping to prevent it narrowing again. The Royal Brompton's "more scientific environment" encouraged Dr Sigwart to leave what was a better-funded service in Switzerland. "I had great difficulties in getting the project through in Switzerland because the infrastructure was missing," he says.

Another international figure is Professor Magdi Yacoub, whose pioneering heart and lung transplants have made him a household name. "The hospital provides the whole spectrum of cardiac surgery, from neonates (babies less than a week old) with all complex types of congenital heart disease to people with degenerative heart disease, valve disease, coronary disease," Professor Yacoub says.

The Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital together run the world's biggest transplant programme, catering for heart, heart-lung, single lung and double-lung transplants. Professor Yacoub says: "If we are to make headway in the care of patients, we should be able to care for the patients at the very highest level in large numbers and at the same time have a grasp of basic science, and apply it." The hospital is conducting research into surgical procedures, and the mechanism of the disease that creates the need for surgery.

Professor Yacoub says: "We feel it is our duty to research it. As surgeons, we want to prevent the disease we treat. What constitutes research and care is totally indivisible."



Research: Magdi Yacoub

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Computer alarms save babies from cot deaths

Researchers can now help children at risk, writes Thomson Prentice

Every year in Britain, 1,500 families are devastated by the sudden, inexplicable death of a baby. Despite the efforts of doctors and scientists, cot deaths have remained until recently a heartbreaking mystery.

Researchers at the Royal Brompton have discovered one of the causes of these deaths. At the same time, they are developing effective methods which may prevent some of the tragedies.

The cause has emerged from studies at the hospital during the past 18 months, of 350 babies who have had narrow escapes from cot death. The babies were referred to the hospital because of its reputation as one of the world's leading cot death research centres.

The work has been led by Dr David Southall, a consultant paediatrician. He and his colleague, Dr Martin Samuels, together with Dr David Talbot, of the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith, west London, found that among the babies was a sub-group of about 50 that had had recurrent "near death" episodes, during which they went blue and became unconscious.

When they looked at these infants in great detail, they found a sinister common factor. Severe disturbances had occurred in the control of blood supply through the babies' lungs. Instead of being oxygenated by the lungs, the blood was bypassing the gas-exchanging tissues, producing a dramatic and potentially fatal drop in blood oxygen.

"There is absolutely no



Safe in bed: baby Ashleigh Jade Wilkes with Dr Samuels (left) and Dr Southall

about that this is one of the underlying mechanisms of sudden infant deaths," Dr Southall says. Such episodes are often signalled by the baby uttering one startled cry, followed by silence.

The finding is one of the most important in the long and frustrating history of scientific investigations into cot deaths. But why should such a disturbance take place?

"We know it is brought on, or made worse, by an infection, and by a fall in the oxygen levels in the ambient air around the baby," Dr Southall says. The bacterium that causes whooping cough is

another contributor. "The blood supply is also profoundly affected if the child is upset or angry, startled or frightened," Dr Southall adds.

He and Dr Samuels, a lecturer in paediatrics at the hospital, have found that giving the drug clonidine and administering oxygen into the baby's nostrils may combat the symptoms. Clonidine, sometimes used to treat migraine in children, modifies nerve impulses from the brain to the blood vessels in the lungs, allowing the blood to be oxygenated normally.

In a life-saving extension to their studies, the specialists have provided parents of high-risk babies with monitors, costing about £2,000, that continuously measure oxygen levels on the skin, and set off

an alarm if there is a dangerous drop. The parents keep the monitors until the baby is about nine months old. Cot deaths are rare after this age.

About 400 babies have been protected in this way. Dr Southall and colleagues have developed a battery-powered computer that can be linked to the monitor at the infant's cot. As well as recording the oxygen levels, it chronicles the baby's heartbeat and its breathing.

"We already have from the computers a number of documented cases of near-death episodes, and the underlying mechanism that disturbs blood oxygen is common to many of them," Dr Southall says.

● The author is Medical Correspondent of The Times.

A multi-million pound project is leading the way towards detecting, in its beginnings, one of the nation's biggest killers, blocked arteries. Screening people will be possible "well within the next five years", says Professor Donald Longmore, professor of magnetic resonance in medicine at the Royal Brompton, who adds: "We are already doing it tentatively."

Professor Longmore set up the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) department at the Royal Brompton in 1984 as a result of two discoveries in 1976 "that seemed to me to be about to change the face of medicine". One was the discovery of prostacyclin, a substance that stops blood clogging up within the human body, the other the production of the first human nuclear magnetic resonance machine.

"I thought that as a result of these we had the beginnings of the possibilities of a new era in medicine of preventing the disease that kills half of us — blocked arteries, killing the heart on the head," he says. While trying to raise funding for the Brompton project, Professor Longmore did research at the Hammersmith hospital in London, which had an MR machine. He was one of the team that pioneered heart scanning and the measurement of blood flow.

The next year, he started a joint venture between the Corda charity (the Coronary Artery Disease Research Association), the Brompton and British industry to build an MR scanner for the heart.

The MRI unit demonstrates the interaction between the hospital and the institute. The unit's work is broadly divided into three areas: basic physics research, clinical science — "looking at normal people to try out the ideas the physicists have developed" — and clinical practice for patients at the hospital. The scientific team includes Sir Godfrey Hounsfield, the Nobel prizewinner who invented the computerised tomography (CT) scanner.

Professor Longmore says that MRI is "right at the edge of man's understanding of physics". Broadly, it works as follows: nuclei (the centres of atoms in the body) spin on their axes at about a billion billion revolutions a minute. Some of these nuclei carry a positive electric charge; with the high-speed spin, the charge

On the trail of the great heartbreaker

Screening for one of the danger signs, blocked arteries, may soon be possible

is turned into a magnet, causing the nuclei to line up in a magnetic field, rather like compass needles in the Earth's magnetic field.

If people are placed within a magnetic field that is more powerful than the Earth's, such as the MR machine, the nuclei will line up with that. They will also wobble like a child's top that has been pushed sideways and, in doing so, emit signals in a radio frequency band.

The radio signals they give out are in direct relationship to the strength of the magnetic field. By altering the strength, the signals automatically adjust to match it. So, by making each part of the body have a unique magnetic field

strength, the scientist can listen to the radio signals and know where they are coming from. From that, "maps" can be created of people's insides.

"It is all harmless," Professor Longmore says. "There are no x-rays, no nuclear isotopes, nothing."

One question to be answered is whether, if people change their lifestyle to reduce the known risk factors, the natural course of heart disease will be altered.

"My real intention is not to use this as a diagnostic machine," Professor Longmore says. "I am trying to develop it as a preventive instrument, so we can look at normal healthy people and study their circulation and try to detect arterial

disease before it gets set." A thousand "normal people" studies had already been carried out.

Before population screening becomes a reality, however, a technical breakthrough is needed to allow faster imaging and a better method of looking at the coronary arteries to the heart, he says. "We are going to have the means to do that when we have conquered the last few technical problems."

"We can do the carotid arteries to the head and the major vessels in the body, and we can study the damage to the heart, using drug trials. But we have not yet got the key element, which is measuring the blood flow to heart directly." To that end, a £5 million fund-raising appeal is to be launched to develop the necessary machine.

In all this, a problem is to keep the research funding going. "Making sure the money comes in is a huge slog — and it is not easy in Britain," Professor Longmore says.

"The other problem is that in this country we pioneer things but there is no proper national support. So we see our lead eroded by the Americans and the Japanese."

PAT BLAIR



Switching on: a ward at the Royal Brompton is checked by electrician Michael Flynn



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Journey to the centre of the body

The hospital has Britain's only Imatron, the £1.5 million scanner considered to be the best available. Pat Blair reports

For state-of-the-art equipment, the Royal Brompton National Heart and Lung Hospital is among the front-runners, in no area more so than radiology.

Many hospitals now have the computerised tomography (CT) scanner that took diagnosis to new heights. The Royal Brompton has the distinction of being the only British hospital with an Imatron, "unquestionably the most advanced CT scanner there is", according to Dr Simon Rees, who heads the radiology department.

The concept is that of Sir Godfrey Hounsfield, the inventor of the CT scanner. Like the CT scanner, the £1.5 million Imatron produces pictures that look like slices of the body. It can collect data to produce the "slices" in a twentieth of a second. Not only can it halve the total time it takes to scan patients, the Imatron's shorter exposure has revolutionised chest scanning, Dr Rees says.

With conventional CT scanning, pictures of the heart are blurred, because of the heart's movement. The Imatron's speed produces an extraordinarily sharp picture.

The machine enables doctors to look at such things as how blood flows through the muscle of the heart, and how it is affected by coronary disease. "You can plot a map of the bits that are not getting enough blood," says Dr Rees, who calls it "a very exciting machine". Because of its speed, it can take pictures while patients do exercise tests and is, he says, increasing the options for investigating coronary disease.

In addition, it has improved the way in which doctors investigate people with lung problems — the quality of images is much better and the radiation dose is lower, down by 50 per cent in adults.

A further advantage is that in paediatric medicine it removes the need for general sedation. Dr Rees

says: "If you wanted to get pictures of children, who were wriggling, hitherto you have had to give them a general anaesthetic."

The machine was acquired by persuading a private company to buy it and allow the hospital to run it as a commercial venture. With government changes imminent in the NHS — turning it into an organisation of "providers" and "purchasers" — the Royal Brompton can become a provider from which the service of the Imatron can be bought by other hospitals, public and private.

"To make it pay, we are going to have to be dependent on the private sector to some extent," Dr Rees says.

In cardiology, meanwhile, doctors no longer need to use cine film to take pictures before a coronary by-pass operation or angioplasty.

"We have gone over to using, for the first time in the world, a filmless system, with video only," Dr Rees says. "The video is of very high quality. There are two laboratories equipped to this standard, and a third in which we are going into the field of peripheral vascular disease."

The hospital has therefore raised funds to buy the most advanced Doppler ultrasound, which can tell doctors how blood is flowing through an artery.

In intensive care, patients often need to have frequent x-rays, and it is technically difficult to get the correct exposures. It can be awkward to get the films underneath supine patients. The hospital has the country's first computerised digital x-ray system, a £100,000 machine made by Fuji, the photographic company, for which it is being evaluated.

Dr Rees says: "Having taken the film, you put the plate in a computer where it extracts the information, then automatically produces an image which has the correct exposure. This also means that you can deliberately under-



Scanning advance: the Imatron, demonstrated by Dr Simon Rees

expose the film, reduce the radiation to the patient by 50 per cent and still get the perfect image."

Another "even more ingenious" chest x-ray device being evaluated, this time for Kodak, is Amber (advanced multiple beam equalisation radiography).

With Amber, a microcomputer makes adjustments according to

the mass being x-rayed — for example, greater exposure for the heart, less for the lungs.

The result is an evenly exposed plate that reveals the maximum amount of information for all areas of the chest: another weapon in the medical armoury to diagnose, and treat better, patients with heart or lung disease.

Intensive care places heavy demands on nursing staff. Accord-

Doctors struggle to fight a ruinous inheritance

When Margaret Hodson was a medical student 25 years ago, the only cystic fibrosis patients she saw were small children. Sufferers of this cruel, inherited disease didn't live long enough to become adults.

Today Dr Hodson, a consultant physician, is director of the cystic fibrosis department at the Royal Brompton, and there are about 1,500 adult cystic fibrosis patients in Britain, many of them now married with children of their own.

"The improvements in diagnosis and treatment in the last ten or 15 years have been extraordinary, and the quality of life of people with cystic fibrosis is immeasurably better," Dr Hodson says.

"Fifty years ago, eight out of ten children born with the disease died within a year. Nowadays, such children can grow up, have full-time education, be fully employed, and look forward to a long life."

Much of this progress is due to pioneering work done at the Royal Brompton, which has the largest adult clinical service in Europe for patients with the disorder and takes referrals from all over Britain.

Cystic fibrosis is caused by a defective gene that particularly affects the lungs, causing chronic infections, and the digestive system, which becomes unable to absorb fats and other nutrients

Cystic fibrosis victims now live to adulthood thanks to advances

from food. The gene is carried symptomlessly by about one person in 25. If a couple who are both carriers have a baby, the child has a one in four chance of inheriting the defect and being born with the disease.

Although the condition is sometimes obvious soon after birth, in many cases it escapes detection for months or even years. Often the child's growth is stunted and the sufferer is vulnerable to recurrent chest infections, causing constant coughing and shortage of breath.

The Royal Brompton plays a leading role in research into the condition, investigating the gene, and refining treatments for patients. The use of a wide range of antibiotics has dramatically improved the outlook for sufferers since about 1975, but the most striking advance in treatment is heart-lung transplants for sufferers, first performed only five years ago.

Due largely to the skills of transplant surgeon Professor Magdi Yacoub and colleagues, the hospital, in conjunction with Harefield Hospital, west London, has performed more of these

operations than any other centre in the world. The longest surviving patients have celebrated their fourth anniversary of the operation, and about 70 per cent survive one or two years.

"This is a life-saving option for some of our sickest patients, but it is not appropriate for most sufferers, and there is a constant shortage of donor organs," Dr Hodson says. "The operation is suitable only for a severely ill patient who has received all other forms of conventional treatment without improvement."

During the operation, the diseased lungs and the heart are removed, and a new heart and two lungs are stitched into place. Most recipients donate the heart they no longer need to another patient with heart failure, who is waiting in an adjacent theatre. This process of saving two lives simultaneously is called a "domino" operation. In some cases, only a lung transplant is carried out.

Only about 100 heart-lung grafts for cystic fibrosis sufferers have been performed in Britain. The hospital currently treats about 300 cases a year.

Most CF patients need to have physiotherapy twice a day to drain the abnormal mucus that gathers in their lungs. Increasingly, treatment is being offered at home, rather than in hospital.

THOMSON PRENTICE

Ready for the war's casualties

Intensive care units are on standby

ing to Jenny Hunt, the hospital's chief nurse, it takes the time equivalent of about six nurses to keep one intensive care bed available for use. "We have sufficient establishment nursing staff to run between 12 and 14 of the beds," Dr Morgan says. "We are looking at ways, involving agency staff and other sources of funding, of boosting it to 16."

The six adult beds not yet opened will be available to receive any casualties from the Gulf war, if the hospital, which is on standby,

is called on to use its expertise and advanced equipment to treat the war wounded.

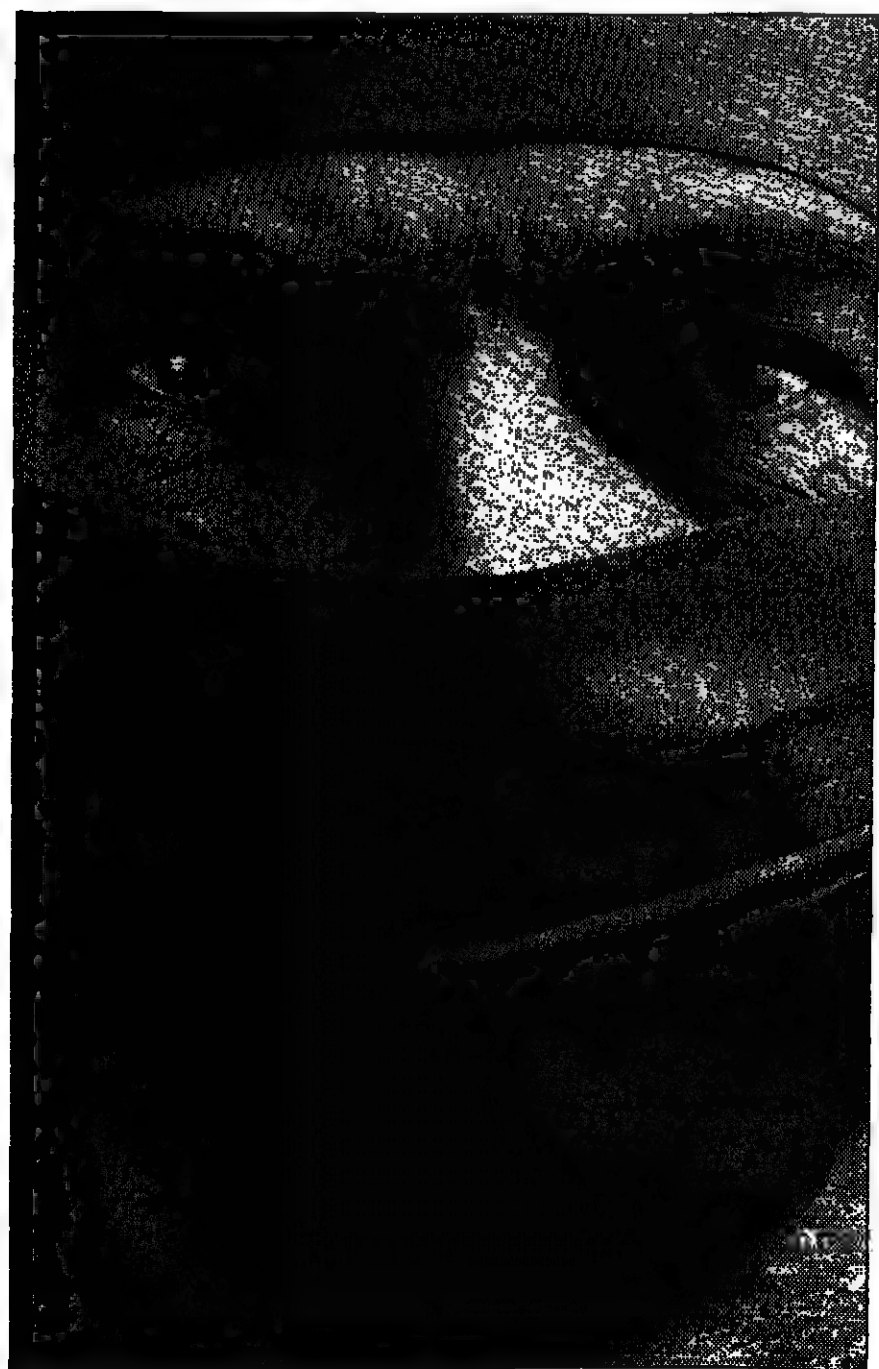
The ICU is preparing to install a fully computerised system, with a terminal at every bedside, so nursing and medical staff will no longer have to transfer to manual charts all the readings from the multiplicity of equipment attached to each patient and displayed on the video screen beside the head of every bed.

When the system has been fully tested and refined, it may help to relieve the shortage of trained nursing staff available in intensive care.

The system should, Dr Morgan adds, allow nurses time "to look for trouble, rather than deal with it when it has arrived". Equally important, it should allow nurses time to explain to patients' relatives what is happening.

"Nurses play a vital role in providing information and reassurance and detecting when there is false optimism — or false pessimism," he says. "They can do that only if they have time."

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